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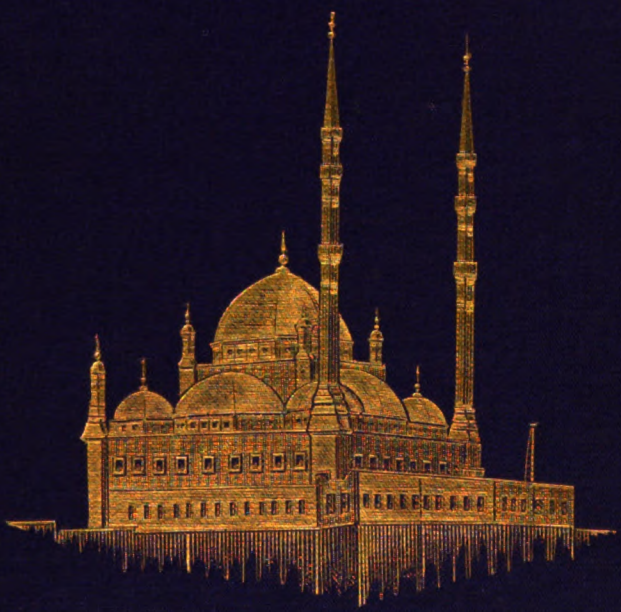
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VEILED MYSTERIES OF EGYPT



S. H. LEEDER

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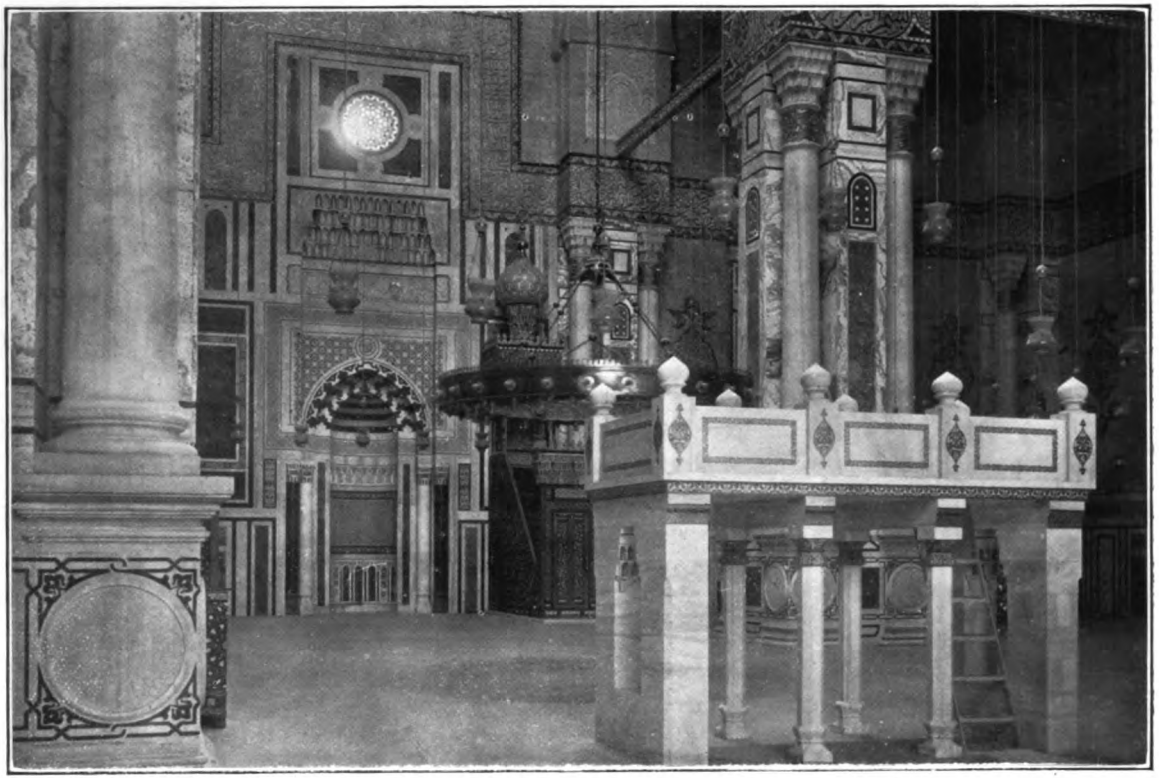
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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

THE GORGEOUS NEW MOSQUE OF EL-RIFAI, NEAR THE CITADEL, IN CAIRO.

This mosque has been built by the family of the Khedive at a fabulous cost. This photograph, which is the first of the mosque to be published, was taken by special permission for this book.

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VEILED MYSTERIES OF EGYPT

AND THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

BY

S. H. LEEDER

AUTHOR OF "THE DESERT GATEWAY"

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR
G. LEKEGIAN, AND P. DITTRICH, CAIRO

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1913

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TO

EDWARD BOUSFIELD DAWSON

AS A SIGN OF

AFFECTION AND GRATITUDE

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PREFACE

THERE has always been a veil of mystery over the religion of Islam, from its very first days. The mockery of the Jews stung the early Moslems, who sprang from a people keenly sensitive to ridicule, as they are even now. The bitterest sayings of the Prophet were excited by those who scoffed at the religious exercises of himself and his followers.

It was mockery that led Mohammed to enjoin secrecy for much of the liturgical worship of his people, and possibly had something to do with the order to seal Arabia, and the Holy Cities of Medina and Mecca especially, against all men of a different faith. It is the fear of mockery which closes the most sacred places of Islam to this day, a fear which in some places engenders a fanatical resentment against the prying of strangers.

Secrecy has told against a proper understanding of the practices of this religion. An almost invulnerable reticence on the part of its adherents has led the casual or unsympathetic observer into mistaken judgments, or has left those in deep ignorance of the truth, who, dealing with a franker people, would, by residence amongst them, have become familiar with the views and practices of their neighbours. It is a rare thing in Egypt, for instance, to find anything more than a superficial knowledge of Islam on the part of European residents. As for the ordinary tourist, between the chicanery of the

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plausible scamp calling himself a dragoman, and the deep reserve of the religious Moslem, it is something less than knowledge that he takes away with him.

To anyone who would understand the greater human forces at work in the world, the importance of something like a just appreciation of a religion numbering over two hundred and sixty million souls is at once evident. Napoleon at one period of his life thought to use this great force in his project of a world-conquest, and declared that he might even become a Moslem himself. In our present day we have seen the approach of Germany to Islamic Turkey, with an undoubted eye on the Chaliphate of Islam; the Kaiser going so far as to speak of the Sultan as "my friend and ally." In Cairo I have heard the suggestion, from Mr. Carl Peters himself, which in one of his recent books of travel he puts into precise words: "There is one factor which might fall on our side of the balance, and in the case of a world-war might be made useful to us; that factor is Islam. As Pan-Islamism it could be played against Great Britain, as well as against the French Republic, and if German policy is bold enough, it can fashion the dynamite to blow into air the rule of the Western Powers from Cape Nun (Morocco) to Calcutta."

And yet the extent of the ignorance of Islam in the West is as great as it is incomprehensible. Any man who has nothing to guide him but the popular knowledge of the Prophet of Arabia and his teachings, as they affect his followers to-day, must find, as I did, when I came to live with the Arab folk of North Africa, and later of Egypt, and to read the Koran for myself, how perplexingly ignorant of the truth he is.

If he turns to the writings of the professional Oriental-

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ist he finds little real help, for they are redolent of the lamp, and seldom of the ways and haunts of living men; to the writings of the missionaries, he finds them in many cases imbued with a strange dislike of everything Islamic, which makes them partial, and inadequate to really inform the mind of the unprejudiced inquirer. I do not write this in antagonism to the work of the missionaries. But I am bound to admit that I know nothing more misleading than those missionary writings, which are having the greatest acceptance just now, of the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall, whose *Religion of the Crescent* I consider a heartless book, for all its scholarship. One page of Lady Duff Gordon's kindly observations of the life of Moslem people in her *Letters from Egypt* is worth all its erudition. Mr. Samuel M. Zwemer, the secretary of the Students' Volunteer Movement in America, who has lived as a missionary in Arabia, is another prolific writer whose cruel and relentless attacks on Islam are finding great acceptance with stay-at-home people of the West. Though the readers may be excited thereby at the degradation and darkness they are called upon to contribute to remove, they are certainly misled if they think they are gaining a fair view of the life and religion of the people described. It is strange to me that men holding views so lacking in sympathetic insight as these two writers could ever expect to find any acceptance with, or to do good to, the people they can so write of.

The controversy aroused by a speech of the Bishop of London last year, in the Albert Hall, will be fresh in many minds. Moslems everywhere were amazed and hurt that they could be said to "turn out the name of Christ as evil," the name they revere equally with

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the name of their Prophet, and whose virgin mother they never mention without terms of deep respect. The Bishop, when the storm broke, admitted that he knew nothing of Islam, but had gone for his information to the work, *The Reproach of Islam*, by the Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner, who for over ten years has been a missionary in Cairo. This work is not bitter, as the others are, but it is, like them, lacking in that sense of human affection, without which, it seems to me, no man can expect to find acceptance for a religious message by a strange people; for without affection he can never truly understand their aspirations and their needs.

It is true there are other men amongst the missionaries to Islam who are pursuing a different line, taking to their work a genial and unbiased spirit, which puts them in kindly touch with the people they want to help. As an instance of a work of this sort, I may mention *Aspects of Islam*, by Duncan Black Macdonald. The Rev. C. F. Andrews, of Delhi, is a man who never says a word about the Moslem people which is not instinct with kindliness and justice. If such books increase, it will be impossible to assert that it is to the works only of ordinary travellers, and not of missionaries, that one must look for anything like a true picture of the life and religion of Islamic lands.

I hope my simple work may be found to contribute a little to the result I desire—of greater fairness and better understanding and appreciation of the motives and ideals of the followers of Mohammed. My only equipment is sympathy, a fairly long residence with the people I have sought to know, and quite exceptional facilities, in Egypt especially, for getting behind the veil, for penetrating the mysteries of the religion predominant there.

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A profound study of Islam, based upon the immense Arabic literature, it is not in my power to attempt. I have striven only to give the living people the opportunity, which they have never had, of stating for themselves their beliefs and their views. I have tried to fit into the picture of their life, as I saw it, something of their ideals, with a sympathetic appreciation of what I found to be good and true in the practice of their religion. The teaching they follow is not wanting in stimulation to noble impulses, or of restraining power against evil. In commending to them a higher message, like that of the Gospel of Christ, it is not, to my mind, necessary in any degree to deny these things. Indeed, I am convinced that it has been a great mistake to do this, accounting probably for that want of advance which is always to be deplored.

If it is thought that my picture is too favourable, that I have dwelt too little upon the decadence of Islam, and of the low moral tone prevailing in the East, I can only answer that I look upon my work as merely a supplement to volumes that have been written on this phase of the subject. I have sought the brighter colours, which I consider other men have ignored, hoping truth may gain by a little genial light being thrown upon the whole scene, which before has been too much depressed by the severe and sombrous tones in which it has been represented.

To mention the names of all those leaders and authorities in Islam in Egypt who helped me, and with whom I discussed all the important questions of their faith, would be to tabulate almost every name of importance in the Moslem world at its intellectual centre—Cairo. To the Head of the Church in Egypt I tender my

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grateful acknowledgments, as well as to every other man—sheikh or cadi, teacher or administrator, who so courteously assisted me. To private friends innumerable, in all parts of Egypt, who did so much to make my long stay profitable and enjoyable, I give thanks. Such friendship as I have found in the East would enrich the life of any man. To mention names in any category would be tedious as well as invidious.

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BOOK I

MOSLEM HOME-LIFE IN TOWN AND VILLAGE

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VEILED MYSTERIES OF EGYPT

CHAPTER I

"Strange as it may appear to a generation accustomed to look upon Islam as a cloak for all kinds of vice, it is nevertheless true that . . . many Christians who have come into contact with a living Moslem Society have been profoundly impressed by the virtues exhibited therein."

Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 345.

HOSPITALITY and all that generous chivalry which the protection and care of guests may call forth, are virtues which cover all sins with a true Moslem, especially if he be of Arab descent, however remote. To be hospitable was as important to the ancient tribesmen of Arabia as to be brave:

"A rushing rainflood when he gave guerdons;
When he sprang to the onset, a mighty lion."

Those writers who seek to discredit the Prophet by pointing to the pre-Islamic virtues, should look here for their evidence. The tribal system, when each tribe was ruled by the most generous and the bravest member of it, who pitched his tent at the point most likely to be attacked by an enemy or seen by a returning friend, or a needy wayfarer, had in it noble qualities. With the destruction of the tribal system there was sure to be a diminishing of these virtues, as displayed in royal fashion especially by the chosen leader. But it should not be forgotten that by the same process of reasoning

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it may be shown that the feudal times in England were better than the days of greater security and freedom, for the mass of the people, which succeeded them.

But, as a matter of fact, these noble virtues as shown in the primitive chief have largely survived in the whole Arab race, and in a thousand ways still manifest themselves to the delight of those who come into such intimate relations with the Arab Moslems as admit them into the inner shrine of the home, whether it be the tent or the palace. Not even the austerities of the sect of the Wahabees, who in a blaze of grim Puritan zeal last century tried to take Islam back to the teaching of the Koran and the example of the Prophet, by abolishing all personal display and making smoking and even coffee-drinking a sin—they would not have carpets on their floors because the Prophet had none—could suppress the inherited instincts of a generous hospitality in the Arab mind, as Palgrave testifies in the story of his travels in Central Arabia. It was Palgrave who found painted over a door the distich of the celebrated poet, Omar-ibn-el-Farid:

"Welcome to him of whose approach I am all unworthy,
Welcome to the voice announcing joy after lonely melancholy,
Good tidings thine; off with the robes of sadness; for know
Thou art accepted, and I myself will take on me whatsoever grieves thee."

It has been my privilege to enjoy the hospitality and genial protection of Moslem people under almost every condition—in the Palace of the Pasha, and in the "town house" of the country gentleman in Cairo, as well as in the home of the "Squire" on his distant estates in Upper Egypt. In the Delta, too, I have stayed in what we should call a ducal house, famous for its lavish entertain-

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ment of guests, who might be embarrassed by the wealth of hospitality shown them, but for that charming courtesy with which it is offered—a courtesy perfect in its quietness and restraint, which enables it to wed itself with the desires and wishes of the guest in such a way that the mind becomes free to enjoy the good that is offered without a single disturbing thought.

This same chivalry towards a guest appears equally, as I well know, in the tent of the desert, and the mud hut of the remote oasis, where it can charm away the limitations of poverty as surely as it can soften the demonstrativeness of wealth. I valued very highly these opportunities of intimate acquaintance with the people, apart from the true friendships I formed, for the European rarely sees the best of Moslem society. He easily makes acquaintance with the official class, the Egyptian who has learned in European cities to despise his religion; but he is debarred as a rule from entering the circle of true Moslems of good birth and education and pious life.

We were invited to spend a week in a remote village in Upper Egypt with friends whom we had known and visited in Cairo. Arrived at the nearest railway station we were met by a son of the house, with a regular cavalcade of servants and horses, and the humble ass, for the five-mile ride across the fertile plain. The white Arab mare reserved for my use was gorgeous in its trappings; it was the squire's own beast, in gala array. The servants —each beast had an attendant—were of the fellaheen class, gentle and smiling, as that simple people usually are; especially when, as in this case, they are attached to an old historic house and a master whom they revere, and as their ancestors have been, "time out of mind."

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Our winding narrow path lay through the fields, and by the waterways, which alone bring the possibility of fertility to them; the fields being green everywhere with the tall ripe crop of sugar-cane and Indian corn, as well as with the new beans just springing up.

All this part of Egypt flourishes under the boon of the ever-spreading system of irrigation, which men even in the days of Mohammed Ali dreamed of, and realised—on paper—but which British rule has made possible. All the canals we passed are new; until two years since the natural flood from the Nile was the only chance for the one annual crop where now three crops are grown every year.

My friends are Arab Egyptians, with all the piety of the early Moslems, and unspoiled by that contact with modern civilisation which their wealth enables them to have. Naturally they owe much to this threefold enriching of their lands, and they are candid enough to admit this. The railway too, which recently reduced the road distance from the village by eight miles, and made possible a daily post, is a greatly appreciated benefit.

It is not necessary to blindly love the British occupation to acknowledge the material benefits it has so lavishly brought with it, or to give up all that is represented by Nationalistic ideals because one will not accuse it of "Egypt's ruin," or curse everything English as it concerns the country of the Nile, in the fashion of Mr. Wilfred Blunt.

An amusing period to our journey was made by the canal, about half-way, which had to be crossed by ferry. Here was an opportunity to see the country-folk at close quarters—the promiscuous little crowd waiting for the

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ferry on this side, and the group packed on the ferry-boat coming towards us, to say nothing of the various animals which accompanied them. Anyone who knows Egypt can imagine the noise, the excitement, the chaff and badinage as each man gives advice—which no one heeds—to every other soul within range.

The boatman, as an exception from the general good temper, was a wag, but of the surly and sarcastic order. His remarks to his human cargo were an example of that coarseness coming from a brutal frankness of expression so universal in the East, and which to English ears is revolting. A criticism he hurled at a peasant girl of fourteen or so, for her clumsiness, and at which both men and women smiled, would—I hope—have brought him a swift blow from the roughest navvy in England. In Chaucer's day our own forefathers were lacking in what we now think is decent reserve in speech; we had not advanced too far when Shakespeare or even Fielding wrote. I am told that in Egypt a slow improvement is noticeable as education increases: and on the effendi (or gentle class), at least, intercourse with Western people is having its effect, as I can testify. I admit that the coarseness is still appalling in native conversation; but it is something gained that the Egyptians have come to realise that its repression is required by all decent Europeans with whom they have dealings. Neither my wife nor I ever had a coarse remark addressed to us during the many months we have lived with Eastern people.

This boatman was particularly enraged with one of our servants, a negro, whose mule slipped into the canal from the muddy deck of the ferry; the servant nimbly jumping on to its back and swimming it across

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the canal, by which two fares were lost! Vials of wrath for the negro, succeeded by withering scorn for all our servants, the only tangible point of insult being that they were wearing boots—and such boots! the young master's "left-offs," treasured for years, and put on to-day in honour of visitors. He would tell the Bey—their master—that such stuck-up rascals were unfit to serve him. All of which abuse was received with good-natured smiles by our party, whom he obviously wished to excite to conflicting rage.

It was interesting to see the skill with which those in charge of buffaloes—perhaps a young girl or a boy of six or seven—would induce the beasts to go through the stream so as to avoid the ferry charge. The saving of the tenth of a penny is worth any exertion where the folk are so poor as the fellaheen of Egypt are.

We were a merry boat-load that eventually started; there is nothing of bucolic muteness about these poor labouring people, but good-humoured and ready civility, a responsive smile, very little impertinent curiosity, and a willingness to serve.

At last we remounted and rode away. The land we now passed had all been under water at high Nile, so that the two or three villages in sight standing on slight eminences had lately been islands, but the flood had now returned to the waterways and the river. The villages, standing amidst their palm trees, with the minaret of the mosque always rising as the crowning point, looked very picturesque.

Soon in the distance the village in which we were to stay appeared, standing prettily on its small round hill or mound. In the centre was the large house, remarkable in an Egyptian village from having three

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

A Village Scene: Drawing Water from the Nile by the Hand-worked Shadouf.

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storeys and standing very high above the other houses. It was, however, the minarets of the mosques that our friend Omar very proudly pointed out—for here there are two or three places of prayer, one of them built by the chief family of the village.

We turned across the last field of beans, then into a lane, and were at once in the narrow ways of the hamlet; such a sudden contrast from those wide spaces of land and sky of the valley of the Nile.

The great house we had seen from afar belongs to the family with whom we are to stay; but for us is reserved, as the custom is, a small separate house, with its own courtyard, adjoining the larger residence. It was at our own door that we were received by the men of the family, two older brothers of Omar, with that courtesy of which we were confident. This house, and all it contained, with its own servants, was ours; literally we were to have sole possession of it; they were honoured by our coming; we were welcome, more than welcome. *All* was ours, if only we would please them by accepting it.

In the Eastern way, these gentle compliments would break out again in pauses of the conversation. One of the brothers would smile at me and say, "An honour to our village. You bring a blessing on our house. Allah yisallimak (God preserve you). From this moment we begin to live." Put into bald English, I fancy I hear a murmur of "gush" and "effusiveness." I admit it; these greetings are a form of ceremonial politeness, but they are said with a quiet graciousness which must be experienced before, to prosaic Western minds, their charm can be realised. And the wealth of practical hospitality with which they are followed shows that

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they are inspired by sincerity. It was remarked once by the natives of a certain village in this part of Egypt that the murrain broke out as a punishment for churlishness to a stranger!

I was amused later on to notice that this politeness goes so far as to lead a man who is silently reading a letter from a friend to make an audible reply to the compliments addressed to him in the letter, in exactly the same way as though the writer were present.

We sat for a time in the salemlik (or men's reception hall) with our hosts and chatted and smoked and drank coffee. Then Omar introduced us to our establishment. It was built rather like a square bungalow, only with loftier roof, and the usual central hall of the Arab house of the rich classes, with a room at each corner leading out of the hall.

Our bedroom was large, and, with its mosquito-curtained beds, quite modern in its furnishing, but for an Eastern brass jug with spout, and its basin, for washing. Omar explained that our man-servant would come in to pour water from the jug for us when we wished to wash! Then bethinking himself that English people preferred a splashing variety of ablution, a servant found a bigger basin and a large jug; and our personal Arab servant, who had no experience of Europeans, was greatly puzzled to be told that we should not need his help in this particular matter.

When we invite guests in the West, we tell them what the arrangements of our *ménage* are, and expect them, more or less, to fall in with them. In the East, by a series of ingenious questions, it will be elicited what the guest's habits and wishes are, and everything will be made to quietly fit into these. I expected this,

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and on my part had tried to find what the family customs were—with little success, I own—so that we made what, I hope, was a compromise in what was finally settled.

This village is so far out of the track of visitors—tourists have never so much as dreamed of the existence of such a place, so far from dahabieh, and Cook's steamer, or even the humblest temple of Isis—that an Englishman outside the official class has never been seen here, and my wife is the first European lady even known to visit it.

I had told my friend that I was anxious to meet with the native people "in their habit as they live" as much as possible. And as by this time he had doffed his European clothes and was dressed in a galabieh (a sort of long cloth smock) he modestly suggested that I should find it easier to approach the unsophisticated country-folk if I wore native dress and a tarboosh. I agreed, and soon found myself similarly robed and with the red tarboosh (fez) on my head, while there was placed at my disposal a second set of garments for special wear, dressed in which I should appear as a full member of the sheikh or learned class. In many ways I found this clothing an advantage. Of its comfort, if one adopts the Eastern mode of sitting on one's crossed legs, there can be no question. As my friend Omar, when he is in the country, is a holiday-maker, and has time for all the daily prayers, he finds this garment convenient, if not necessary, for making the ablutions and other practices of his religion.

As we rode about the country a good deal, we of course passed many men by the wayside, as well as in the villages. I was glad to find that they all returned my greeting "Salaam Aleikum"—"Peace be with

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you "—with the usual reply, "On you be peace." This is the general form—to be first given by the man riding on a camel to one on horseback; by the horse-rider to the rider on an ass; and by him to the man on foot; by a man walking to a man sitting; by a small party to a large one; by the young to the old. Difference of rank does not enter into these general rules touching priority of salutation. It was the Prophet's custom to salute all men, of whatever faith or condition; as he said, "I am sent to be kind and considerate to all men, and not to deal roughly or harshly with them."

If I had been wearing a hat the people would have looked puzzled, and possibly a little displeased, at my salute, and in some cases would not have given the reply, "On you be peace!" for this is regarded as the greeting suitable as between Moslems.

"If ye are greeted with a greeting, then greet ye with a better greeting, or at least return it; God taketh count of all things" (The Koran, Sura iv. 88).

It is a mistake often made, however, to say that the Moslem will not return the greeting of a Christian. It is to the idolater or pagan that as a rule he will not reply with "Peace!" To the Christian the Moslem often answers, "Peace be to him who follows the right way!"

It is extremely interesting, and sometimes amusing, to see the ingenuity and persistency with which two friends, especially after a long absence, will sustain a competition in greetings, one compliment upon the other, always with a better greeting, in obedience to this command.

"Salaam Aleikum!"

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"Aleikum Salaam!"

"With you be peace, and the mercy of God, and His blessing!"

"May your day be blessed."

"May your day be blessed as yesterday."

"May your prosperity be increased."

And so on. There is something in the Arabic language which lends itself to a rhythmic repetition and phrase expansion. Mr. Talbot Kelly, who knows the out-of-the-way people of Egypt so well, from his travels as an artist, speaks of this "old-world courtesy."

"I am frequently salaamed by a native," he says, "who asks, 'Does your work prosper?'

"'Thanks to Allah,' I would reply.

"'God increase your prosperity! Our Lord and the Prophet know the good men.'"

The graceful imagery of the East permeates the expressions of all classes of men, and among the poor fellaheen lends poetry to lives otherwise those of toil and drudgery. Every hour we spent in the fields, and the villages, and by the waterways, exchanging salutes and greetings with the fellaheen, with the unfailing handshake (imagine how it disgusts a young 'Varsity lad fresh from England with his one-"paw-shake"-a-term prejudice) which to a Moslem is the only right way in which to meet a fellow-creature, whether Pasha or slave, served to show us how true this is.

The cordial word between master and man, the curious mixture of unclouded assurance and deference with which the poorest and most unlettered approach the rich and the learned; the dignity on both sides which allows of an equality leading to no loss of self-respect with either—all this serves to create a happy

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fellowship in a community which in a prosier sphere would be dull or even sordid.

Only the women of the village would hide when we appeared, by retiring into a doorway, if possible, or by hiding their heads in their flowing black veils —and this is a tribute to our rank, for the fellaheen women do not veil in the formal sense as the townswoman does; they give no greetings, and only in the case of a woman being well known to one of our party should we speak to one of them.

And wherever we went we met signs of the touching, simple kindness of these people. "Would we honour the house by drinking coffee, or breaking bread in it?" was the invitation from all sides. And what they offer—it is all they possess very often—is done as a matter of course; to suggest reward would be to deeply wound them; all they desire is that you will condescend to accept the respect of which their service is the sign.

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CHAPTER II

" Hither we used to retire when wearied . . . and pass a quiet hour . . . talking over the condition of the country, and its future prospects, discussing points of morality, or commenting on the ways and fashions of the day."

Palgrave, *Through Central and Eastern Arabia*, p. 55.

It was in the *salon* of our own house that we again met the men of the family, as though we were the hosts, and they the guests; and soon after our arrival, on the first day, lunch was announced in an adjoining room. We all went to the dining-room, took our serviettes from the table, and returning to the hall, washed our hands, for by our own desire we were to eat, during our stay here, in the Eastern fashion—with our fingers.

Nothing can exceed the daintiness and the cleanness with which even the humble Arabs eat. If the tourist would have proof, let him watch the boatmen waiting for the Kasr-el-Nil bridge to open, under the Semiramis wall in Cairo, as they sit round the common dish at their evening meal, as the sun is setting.

For my part I sit at meals, eaten in this way, with pleasure, knowing how scrupulously clean the hands of a Moslem are (the right hand only is used for eating, and that is always kept from impure contact), for in addition to the prayer ablution there is always this special washing at each meal. And one is spared all reflection on the mysteries of hotel or even domestic " washing-up " of plates and spoons and forks.

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What a meal this luncheon was—forerunner of an unbroken succession of banquets twice a day to the end of our stay. Happily, as Omar had been in England, he knew our limitations of appetite (and digestion), and we were not pressed to eat of each of the innumerable courses, as the usual Egyptian custom dictates.

After the coffee and siesta in the hall, we explored the village and met its dignitaries and notables. A village of this size—there are two thousand inhabitants all told—has a mayor and a deputy mayor, on which officials we now called to pay our respects. They are appointed by the Government, at a small salary, but with certain privileges—for instance, the mayor's son is exempt from military service. The mayor is responsible for law and order, and can give sentence of imprisonment up to twelve hours. He is responsible to the mudir.

Egypt, we learned, is divided into provinces, each province being ruled over by a mudir, with a sub-mudir. Each province is divided into districts, and over each district is a mamour who has control over a number of police officers. The mamour has oversight of the villages in his district, each village having an omdah or mayor. The province in which I stayed was that of Benisuif, which is in the third or last grade, having three mamours over its three districts. Tanta, in Lower Egypt, is the first province in rank, having eleven districts. There is a provincial council for each province presided over by the mudir. The administration work of the province is under the eye of an English "Inspector of the Interior," and these officials are members of the councils which have authority over the omdahs, but they are not members of the provincial council.

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

AN EGYPTIAN WOMAN AND BABE.

Showing the dress of the peasant class, and the way the infants are always carried.

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From a narrow street we emerged into the brilliant sunshine, which in winter—it was now December—is in Egypt truly golden, and of all things in nature the most delightful and grateful.

On the village green—only it is not grass-green, but dust-grey—flocks of geese were preening themselves, and the children, dressed in every bright colour, played in groups. On the opposite side, outside a cottage door, sat a number of men in white or blue galabiehs, smoking and chatting. Now there pass three or four women, in black, one of them with a bright bundle of a child straddled on her left shoulder, another with water-pot on her head—the sunshine making, with each turn of the kaleidoscope, a perfect picture.

We cross the "green," and enter the winding ways of the village again—they can hardly be called streets, for most of them are only just wide enough for a horse-rider to pass along. The lowly habitations are built of unbaked bricks, in some cases plastered with rough clay, of one storey, and in every way are as elementary a form of house-building as can well be.

And how primitive the people are. I noticed on the outer walls by the side of the entrance of several houses long marks scratched in the clay, in one place as many as four strokes, in another two, and so on. The explanation is that a venerable pedlar, who travels all the way from Medina, with henna, which is particularly esteemed as coming from the Holy City, and visits all the villages in this part of Egypt, gives credit to the poor cottagers, and marks his account in this way on the outer walls!

Another house we passed was decorated round the doorway with crude drawings, denoting that the occu-

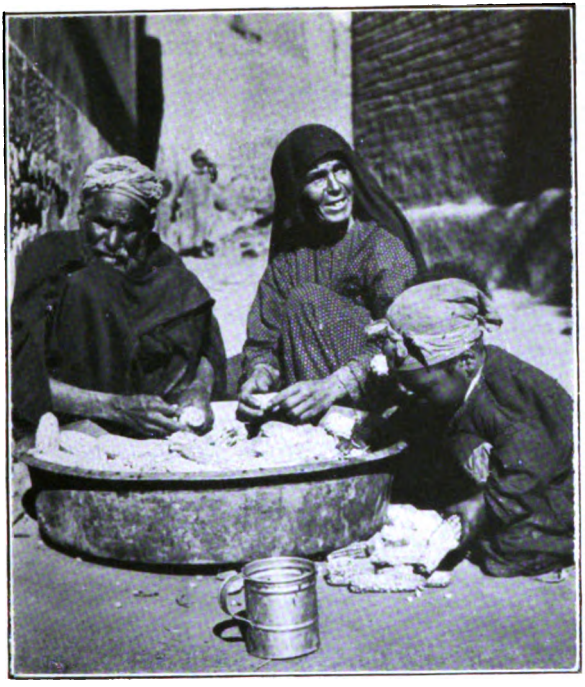
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pant had been to Mecca. A knock at the door, and an old man appeared. There were many handshakings; the old Hadj, as the pilgrim must now be called, beaming with joy at our interest, consented to be photographed. He had saved, with incredible self-denial all his life, in order that he might pray in Mecca before he died, and now he was "making his soul" in his native village, in happy content, sure of the profuse joys of Paradise when his frugal days on earth should end.

A little farther on we called on the "oldest inhabitant," a man aged one hundred and ten. As the whole of his life had been passed in the service of our host's family, his great age was well authenticated. Until quite recently he had enjoyed good health, but now he was deaf and almost blind, and was entirely dependent on his daughter, who was very attached to him. When he realised that he was receiving a visit from the grandsons of his old master, he hugged Omar's hand and kissed it, calling down the blessings of heaven upon him and his brothers.

There is no doubt that the fellaheen of Egypt reach a very great age. In the takieh (or workhouse) at Tourah, near Cairo, I talked with a man aged one hundred and twelve, who had all his faculties, with the exception of a long-chronic weakness of the eyes. His memory was clear, and carried him easily back to the days of Mohammed Ali's power in Egypt. Of course I asked him the secret of his great age, and of course he was positive, as all old people are, that he knew it, although it is the last thing about which there is any agreement. "A good life, hard work (he worked till over a hundred), regularity at prayers, scrupulous keeping of the fast. I believe in fasting, and now that I do not work, I fast two whole days every week, and still keep Rhamadan. I have

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THE "OLDEST INHABITANT," AGED 110, ENGAGED WITH HIS DAUGHTER IN PICKING CORN COBS AT HIS COTTAGE DOOR.



"ON THE VILLAGE GREEN."

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always had faith in God, and so have never worried." A landowning friend of mine has on his estate in Upper Egypt a marvellous old man who is over one hundred and thirty years, authenticated through his lifelong service in the one family. He travels by train to Cairo occasionally, and but for an accident five years since, would show little sign of his great tale of years. He preserved prodigious muscular strength till he was over a hundred and twenty years old, and tales of his prowess would make an interesting volume.

Another visit was to the old man who calls the village to prayer from the minaret of the mosque. As is usual, he had been chosen because he is blind, for the reason that of all things the Arab people dislike even a suggestion of overlooking, or spying, or eavesdropping. The Prophet said, according to one of the traditions, "Whosoever listeneth to other's conversation, who dislike to be heard by him, boiling lead will be poured into his ears at the Day of Judgment."

It will be imagined that the internal arrangements of the fellaheen house are extremely simple; but most of them have two rooms. They have no chairs and tables, and want none; they sit more comfortably on the hard clay floor than we do on chairs. A few earthen pots, a large shallow wooden bowl in which the cakes are made, a water-jar, a stew-pot or two, with perhaps a circular dishstand a few inches high, called a soofra, round which the family sit to enjoy the general meal by daintily dipping into the pot—these are all the furniture or utensils such houses contain.

The most cherished feature of the household is the oven or furn, failing which all sense of comfort for the penetrating cold winter nights is lacking. While we

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were out walking one day my friend Omar was touched on the arm by a boy with a request to go with him to a certain poor abode. He begged leave of us, and disappeared for a time; and when he rejoined us he quietly told me that an old foster-nurse of his who was ill, hearing he had arrived in the village, had sent for him. When he sat on the ground by her side, she had cried for quiet joy that he had come back from foreign travels—he had been away from the village for a year—without the pride which she imagined would prevent him from sitting with her in the old familiar way again! She was cold, now that the winter had come; would he send her a shawl from Cairo, and another blanket, and, above all, now that she was ill, and could not seek fuel, would he arrange for her oven fire to be lighted so that at night she might sleep comfortably on the top of the furn.

The furn makes a wide low shelf, which becomes a convenient and very capacious family bedstead. It is built of brick, with an arched oven underneath it, in which the necessary cooking is done in the daytime; banked at night with the dung-fuel, it affords unspeakable comfort to all the family, who spread their mats on its brick top. There is a particular ginn who inhabits the oven, whose permission is always politely asked before the fire is lighted.

Omar's simple acquiescence in the poor foster-nurse's request is characteristic of the way charity is distributed by the well-to-do Moslem families in Egypt. In this village there were many small households entirely dependent on the unfailing generosity of the great house. The aged servitor we saw was one instance, and this nurse was another.

Later we visited Halima, a freed black slave from the

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Soudan—she had been bought by the family when a girl—who grinned and gurgled with delight, showing all her negro teeth, at the sight of the three brothers, the two elder of whom she had nurtured at her breast, as she told my wife and me quite unashamed. I admired the way in which these dignified and silk-robed men submitted to Halima's embrace. It was delightful to watch their expressions of joy as she proceeded to execute a quite graceful dance to celebrate Omar's return. This took place in the sunshine in front of the humble abode in which she lives in the midst of innumerable children and grandchildren, supremely happy in the support she derives from her patrons. Her greatest consolation is that she has been twice to Mecca, once as the servant of her mistress, and again later, with my host's parents, as a friend. This was their recognition of her intimate and faithful service to them in the days of her slavery—to take her to the Holy City as a friend and an equal.

Soon the magic hour of sunset came on, when all men in Egypt leave their toil, when the fire begins to glow upon the hearth, and the call to evening prayer "before the redness has faded from the sky," rings out from the minaret across the quiet scene. The stream of humanity—man, woman, and child—comes in from the fields. By ablution the men prepare for prayer; our party goes home also to make ready for worship in the mosque, which is by our gate.

Omar, who is in a plain galabieh, needs only to wash, and not to change his clothes, but his brothers take off their silk robes, and don what must be the plainest shirt they possess, throwing over it the voluminous black and unadorned cloak called the abayah. I am to go to the mosque to sit by and see the prayer,

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and an abayah is lent to me, as it is now becoming a little cold.

It is curious that while we in the West specially adorn ourselves for our evening pursuits, the Moslem at the close of day puts aside all his rich clothing. The reason is very simple, as stated to me by my hosts.

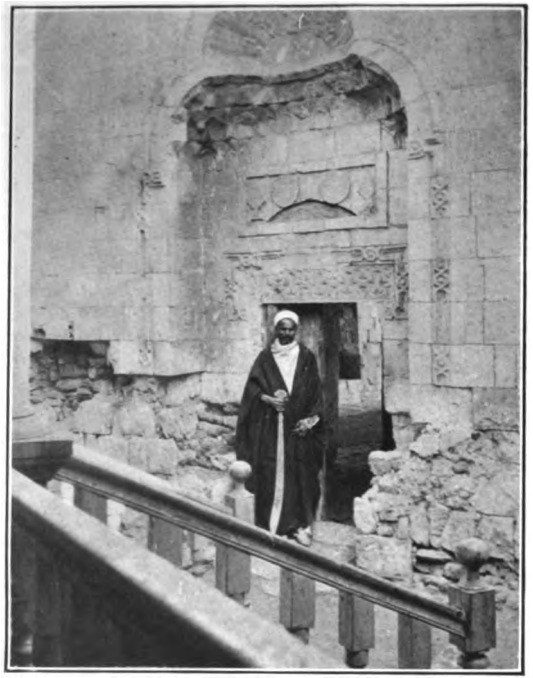
"It is better to pray in humble dress, for the poor are at your side, and all men are equal in the sight of God, in whose presence we stand in the mosque." After prayer too, when the duties of the day are over, and no visitor may be expected from afar whom it would be polite to receive in the sheikh's dress, it is more comfortable to wear these simpler clothes.

And when, after dinner, I was curled up in the folds of my abayah on a divan in our *salon*, I knew that the comfort of the dress was not exaggerated.

We went to the mosque, where two candle lanterns gave a dim light. I took off my shoes and sat behind the little rows of worshippers; who, led by the Imām, made their evening prayer together with a simplicity and earnestness deeply touching in such a remote place; where the humblest toiler of the soil, making prayer his first duty when his arduous work was ended, stands side by side with my respected friends—of whose true goodness and piety, making their praying seem very "right and seemly," I had seen many proofs. The evening prayer consists of three rikas (or bowings), with two voluntary rikas when the Imām has finished the obligatory ones.

No word of protest was uttered against my sitting in the mosque during prayer. On leaving, my hand was grasped by nearly all the worshippers, and every blessing quietly invoked for me.

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THE IMĀM AT THE MOSQUE DOOR, HOLDING IN HIS HAND THE WOODEN SWORD ON WHICH THE PREACHER LEANS IN THE PULPIT.



THE AUTHOR IN SHEIKH'S DRESS.

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It was now quite dark, and the unlighted narrow ways of the village looked very mysterious. From the village green I could hear the voices of boys at play—and later on found that the twilight time is just as attractive to the boys of a village in Egypt as I know it to be in the quiet country places of East Anglia, where my own boyhood was spent. With glowing eyes, one of the boys of this Egyptian village told me of the thrilling games they play in the early evening hours just before bedtime: robbers and brigands, and even the path-finding Red Indian, of whom they have heard by some curious by-way of knowledge. Of all places an Egyptian village would lend itself to such games, with its narrow passages and sharp corners, and the pitch-black shadows when the moon is low on the horizon.

Or on other evenings a glowing fire might be lighted outside one of the houses on the green—many hands would contribute precious fuel—and the boys would be allowed to sit round, roasting potatoes and chestnuts, and listen to the merry or romantic stories circling round. Truly, human nature, and especially boyish human nature, is much the same the world over.

In the East the imaginative type, as everyone knows, predominates; and every child has, I believe, a dream-life which can break for it the bond of material necessity which too early binds the offspring of the poor. How often have I seen these delightful children of the East—sometimes the timid little sons of those "sitters on the bench," the bowabs of Cairo—in animated play with invisible playmates in the realm of fancy, smiling, nodding, gesticulating, happy with a joy it might be thought impossible of realisation in

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such an attenuated little world as they have been born into.

One of my friends often talks to me of his boyhood days in a small Egyptian village. He was a solitary boy, and would often take his food to eat alone in a hut in the garden, which his family called his prison. He was nicknamed by his father the "lonely friend." He would wander the fields by himself, reciting poetry, and especially he would declaim the impassioned phrases of the Koran.

I remarked on the Prophet's love of nature:

> "By the night when she spreads her veil!
> By the day when it brightly shineth!"

I quoted, and he told me how the thrilling passages of the Koran caught him as a boy up into an almost unearthly exaltation of fervour. Later in life Ismael discovered Wordsworth, and often we bandied our favourite lines from the poet of nature; and I confess it was not the Englishman who proved to be best versed in the work of one who is a chief glory of our literature.

When the boys are called home from their evening games—the fragrance of the stew-pot is generally compulsion enough—a great silence falls upon the village, for the fear of ginn is present in every mind; and very unfortunate indeed does the Moslem regard himself—and especially the fellah—who is compelled to walk alone in unlighted ways at night.

"God created men and ginn," the Koran tells him, fearsome beings "created of subtle fire" (Sura xv. 27); not all evil, it is true, but some of them the enemies of man, who assume terrifying shapes.

Even in the twilight these dreaded creatures emerge

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from hiding, a common form being that of a white hare. They traverse the village by-ways and other places with swift and ghostly footsteps, and indulge their caprices, good and bad, with men, just as our ghosts and fairies do.

If you do not believe in the ginn, you have only to look at the heavens for proof; that "shooting star," as you call it, what is it but the stone thrown by one of the angels in heaven when an evil ginn approaches too near in order to try to overhear the conversation of Paradise and thus learn the secrets of the future—"him who listeneth by stealth, at whom a visible flame is darted" (Sura xv. 18).

Is there any wonder that in Egypt most men seek their homes at sunset, and scarcely stir abroad again. I pitied some of these village men, for recently in that neighbourhood bedouin cattle thieves had been abroad —they had even taken away the crops—and this necessitated a certain number of watchers in the fields all night. I saw them set out to their hateful task—they might have been going to execution. The best safeguard, however, against all genii, and even evil dreams, is to make the evening prayer, and this they were careful to do.

At our house, dinner awaited us; and after dinner we went into our drawing-room (I suppose one should call it), an apartment with divans round all the walls, handsome rugs on the floor, and a carved table in the centre, on which was placed the brilliant oil lamp. Here were already gathered the chief men of the village, as the custom is, come together to drink coffee, smoke a cigarette, and, above all, to talk.

And what, may be asked, do people of this sort

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talk about? This, it will be remembered, is a rich house, with a daily newspaper, since the post was recently established, coming from Cairo; and, though in the evenings men of all classes gather here freely, the simple poor, mostly of sobered age, are only too willing to listen to the conversation of men who can read and have enjoyed the advantage, which the Prophet himself commended, of travel.

The quality of the talk was uncommonly good. For one thing I am convinced that all Eastern folk are logicians. Questions of morality, and points connected with religion, frequently occur at such times, with stories from ancient history, especially of the early caliphs; everything connected with the lives of the holy men of Islam is cherished and dwelt upon. There is no question, from the way these stories are universally cherished and handed down, that the youth of Islam have a far better chance of being acquainted with the doings and sayings of the great men of their race than the Christian youth has.

The charges of the West against their religion are well understood, and endless were the questions to elicit my opinion, on such points as Moslem tolerance, the encouragement of learning in the days of Islam's pride, the condition of their people in present days under French rule in Algeria. What did I think of Italian, Spanish, German aggression against Islamic states?

Did I believe the horrible scandals propagated against them in the days of the Crusades, to foster Christian enthusiasm? Did I believe they desecrated the places sacred to the memory of Our Lord Jesus—on whom be blessings and peace—in Jerusalem? Did I realise that Omar made a peaceful entry into that Holy

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

AN EGYPTIAN FAMILY HAVING A MEAL.

The servant lad is standing with the *gullah*, or water-bottle, from which all the family will drink at the end of the meal.

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City with the Christian ruler by his side; and that when the Crusaders entered Jerusalem they boasted in their official report to the Pope that their horses waded knee-deep in blood? Did I believe that the Moslems burnt the great library at Alexandria? They were delighted that I had with me a book I was reading at the time, *The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, in which the case in favour of the Moslems is so ably stated by Dr. Butler, who emphatically believes that the caliph Omar was not guilty of the charge of burning the great library.

Then we turned to newspaper topics, and they waxed very gay over the suffragette movement in England. One of them seriously contended for socialism as it is preached in England now.

"Would to God," he said, "we could stir the people of Egypt from their lethargy so that the poor would claim their fair share of the wealth which now flows into a few hands."

Everyone present showed him how his own interests would suffer—he is a landed proprietor—but he indignantly asserted, to my utter astonishment, that he cared nothing for that; the *principle* was above such considerations. Here was a man, in a primitive village, in a country hardly emerged from the conditions of feudal times, declaring for strikes and revolutions, favouring even the revolt of women!

"I wish Egypt had freedom like that of England, and, even then, that it was keen enough to go on fighting, as the people of England do, for further advance for the good of all the people. In this world everything is for the rich, and the capitalist, who use men for their own ends." I was assured that these views were sincere,

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strange as they seemed in such surroundings. It was an Egyptian country sheikh, I remembered, who said of socialists, "They would break up your pretty clock, and give every man a broken wheel out of it, and so with all things."

The good sense, and temper in argument, in such a community is especially commendable. Whatever the conflict of opinion, there is seldom or never any wrangling. If one of our party was inclined to more than ordinary heat, the elder brother of the house, with that curious mixture of the serious and the benign, often found in the Moslem of this class who has passed his first youth, would say in a low voice, "Blessings on the Prophet," and the disputant would pause to quietly reply, "O God, favour him!" and moderation was at once restored. Loudness is condemned in the Prophet's traditional laws. Lane's observation is as just of the Egyptian Moslem to-day as when he wrote it—they are generally very lively and dramatic in their talk, but scarcely ever noisy in their mirth. They seldom indulge in loud laughter, expressing their enjoyment of anything ludicrous by a smile or an exclamation.

I have often discussed the serious things of life with such a man as this from the desire I have to discover the secret of the calmness and dignity which marks the true Moslem. He believes that God "sends down His tranquillity" (Sura ix. 40) on His servants, as He did on the Prophet—on whom be blessings and peace—when he was in danger. He believes it is his duty to "endure with patience" (Sura xvi. 128), and he gets great encouragement from the thought that, if he suffers oppression, the servant of God who cannot obtain justice in this world reclaims his rights at the Day of Judgment,

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and God, who is just, will then compel his oppressor to make restitution to the oppressed, even the highly favoured martyrs being no exception to this rule.

Another custom is the way they mark one of those pauses in conversation which in England is sometimes denoted by the declaration that "an angel is passing." After a moment of dead silence, one of the company will say, "Wahed dhu!" ("God is One"), and the whole company in a low murmur will repeat, "La ilah illa Allah!" ("There is no God but one God"), and conversation will be resumed.

I made a note of all the proverbs I heard in these talks, for all conversation in the East is enriched with unending proverbs, as with a wonderful power of expression in poetic form and idiom. Here are the proverbs and saws :—

Don't ask any man about his origin; you can read it in his face.

If you censure your friend for every fault he commits, there will come a time when you will have no friend to censure.

If you spend all your time collecting money for fear of poverty, you are practising poverty.

Man is not to be valued by the robes he wears, but by the character he shows.

The false man is a mirror to your face, but a thorn in your back.

A wise enemy is less harmful than a foolish friend.

Make neither your friendship a pretence, nor your hatred a menace.

Men are boxes, of which the keys are dealing and commerce.

A kirat (one twenty-fourth of an acre) of fortune is better than an acre of skill.

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Patriotism is from faith.

He who is standing on the shore may as well be a spent swimmer.

The boy is his mother's double.

God helps us as long as we help each other.

Beware of speech—a word may bring a fatal end.

Avarice destroys what the avaricious gathers.

A king without justice is no better than a river without water.

The best king is he whose courtiers are good; and the worst king is he whose courtiers are bad.

Man is often an enemy to things of which he is ill-informed.

The thing that does not interest you, ask your step-father to perform it.

There is no honour like possessing a good character.

Disdain not a kind action, be it but to give water to one who is *not* thirsty.

Knowledge without practice is like a bow without a string.

Hearts, like bodies, become tired and should have recreation.

No pious act is more beloved by God than telling the truth.

Without hope no mother would nurse her child, nor would any peasant plant his land.

The young who revere the aged will find reverence themselves when they are old.

The next best thing to belief in God is to sympathise with people.

There is much good in patiently tolerating what you dislike.

A true believer is not content while his neighbour is hungry.

There are men who are keys to good, and locks to evil.

Avoid vain hopes—content is prosperity.

Wisdom lifts up a slave into the dignity of princes.

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CHAPTER III

"One must come to the East to understand absolute equality. There is no reason why the donkey boy who runs behind me may not become a great man, and as all Moslems are *ipso facto* equal money and rank are looked upon as mere accidents, and my *savoir vivre* was highly thought of because I sat down with Fellaheen and treated everyone as they treat each other."

Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters from Egypt.*

It was to be expected that we should meet, in these evening gatherings, a young Nationalist, so many of the ardent youths of Egypt being of this political faith. The gist of which is that Great Britain has no rights in their country; that she is an enemy, so deadly, that no good can come of any of her acts; that she violates every article of good faith by staying in Egypt; that, without any parleying or conditions, she should go, and stand not upon the order of her going, but go at once.

As a party, the Nationalists are less effective now than they have been for some time, but there is no doubt that they have been the cause of a great deal of trouble to those responsible for the government of the country. If stability and fixity of political purpose, with wise disinterested control, had been possible in the people of the East, no one can say what the Nationalist cause, which at one time embraced everything in the nation worth counting of youthful enthusiasm and zeal, could have accomplished. Corruption, self-seeking, cunning, allied with a monstrous foolishness, a love of abuse of the enemy lacking all restraint and ignoring

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truth and sense alike, in a desire to score trivial points, all this finding expression in a clap-trap press, such seem to me to be largely the causes of the public discredit in which the party now finds itself, in spite of the great number of its adherents.

Our young Nationalist, a lad of nineteen or so, is a student from one of the great schools in Cairo, vastly intelligent, up to a certain point, keenly interested in all religious and political questions, confident in his views —who is not at that age?—and, though inclined to dictate a little, his courtesy is perfect, and his facility in English remarkable. Political bias is in every thought of the lad, producing a curious retrograde temper, which could even lead him to a defence of Al Azar University as it stands now, with medieval methods taking no note of modern needs, and even ignoring the studies which made Islam famous before the days of decadence set in—a certain stage of which decadence Al Azar has stereotyped. The new reforms introduced by the Government into the University he considers a scandal. The money left was for religious teaching, and to insist on secular subjects being taught is to turn dishonestly from the original purpose. He considers that all the ten years of the Al Azar course should be given to the study of religion and Koranic law and jurisprudence, with, of course, a deep study of the Arabic language.

It was useless to argue in favour of a wide learning for religious men; for that general culture of the mind which would bring to religious lore a finer judgment, and broader understanding, than is possible with concentration on one subject, and the great feats of memorisation which are now the rule.

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Our young Nationalist confessed that he hated the English people as he hated their rule; and he detested the teaching class we send to Egypt, as much as the English language we force the young Egyptian to learn before he can obtain the necessary certificates to qualify him for official employment.

When asked what he thought was the alternative of English rule, in view of the unprotected condition of Egypt, he said Turkey was of course the natural ruler to which an Islamic state like Egypt should look.

Did he realise the weakness of Turkey—had he heard of such a word in connection with that country as "partition"? He believed such talk was folly.

As showing the unbelievable degree of suspiciousness which blinds these men—I have found it universal—he maintained that England's only motive in the Crimean War was to commend itself to Turkey and so to the Caliph of Islam, who is a Turk, because we were afraid of his influence on the Moslems of India and other parts of our Empire.

He could no more believe that such an idea never had any existence in the average English mind than he could realise that in recent British sympathy with Turkey's aspirations after political freedom we could be actuated by a shadow of honesty of motive. Through all, however, his deadliest personal hatred is reserved for Ex-President Roosevelt, for reasons which need no stating.

This is the sort of thing the Nationalist press of Egypt has been filled with every day, to be read with avidity by the youths of Egypt; and this is the sort of thing, with its constant talk of the "fear" of the English rulers, which brings down the governing hand upon them with severity and repression, and in nearly

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all cases makes it impossible to concede anything to them; or even to show a sign of relenting, to modify the punishments of those of them who come under the official displeasure.

A great mistake is made, however, I am firmly convinced, by legislating as though this sort of young student Nationalist had alone to be considered. There is another class of young man in Egypt, quiet, thoughtful, and often travelled, who recognises the folly of the opinions of this youth; who is, nevertheless, in many cases still his intimate friend. Anyone who knows the Oriental character will recognise in such a friendship the extreme reluctance there is in all Eastern people to incur the displeasure of men with whom they associate.

In effect such a youth has said to me—On these topics I never speak to Egyptians (and you are the only Englishman I could ever regard as a friend), for my companions would think me a traitor to my country if I said, that while I do not love England, or the English governing people I meet, I still recognise our debt to her, and the necessity of her staying by us; and that it would be better for all if we could work together.

The Englishman's probity, his firmness of purpose, his hatred of tyranny—*Eastern* tyranny, that is (with a merry twinkle of the eye), and the unselfish pursuit of justice, and detestation of corruption and the callous blackguardly intrigue which poisons our own public life, for all of which Lord Cromer stood like a rock, all these things we admire. Your exclusiveness and snobbery, your "Turf-Club" spirit (the Turf Club is the great meeting-place of English official life in Cairo; its name is misleading; it has nothing to do with the Turf), and your cruel social pride, these things we detest;

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and your scorn of us goes to the quick, and fills us with hopelessness for the future.

In your own gentlemanly way you English are tyrants, to the true effect of which you are blind; and in your repression, and in all the formulas of the young men at the British Agency, by which we youths are practically ruled at present (Lord Kitchener had only just arrived; the hope was that when he had got his "pace" he would see below the thin and all-embracing recipes by which small men think they can comfortably tabulate a strange people), you lack any sort of discrimination. Consequently, the ferocious young Nationalist enjoys the heroism of your punishments, and we who would help you must suffer in silence, and remain ignored and ineffective in serving our country—and poor Egypt must be all enthralled, with little hope or prospect of political liberty.

On one evening we stayed to chat in the mosque, where it is quite permissible to hold a village confab. Indeed, the mosque is the fitting scene for all the chief concerns of life. Here an important journey should have its start and its end; in the old days a man's camel knelt by instinct at the door of the mosque. It is here, in times of fear or of thanksgiving, that the people should first meet. "Now, however," said my friend sadly, "it is the café, especially in the towns, that is taking the place of the mosque."

It was an interesting thing to hear the conversation of the fathers of the hamlet as we sat in a circle on the mosque mats in the dim candle light. It was not a religious discussion, although texts from the Koran interspersed it, and there was much talk of ancient sheikhs' tombs in that part of the country, and the

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supernatural attributes of the holy men buried there, about which they were full of lore.

A word from me, and they became reminiscent—of the dreadful days of the courbash (the tyrant's whip), or the nabout (his stick weighted with lead); for some of them are not too old to bear posterior scars, the sign that they were not such cravens—or bloated millionaires—as to pay the taxes as the agent first demanded them. Fot if they had done so, it would have been taken as a sign that they could have been squeezed for a larger contribution. It was no uncommon thing in those days for men to run away to the hills to escape the extortionate taxgatherer, and to live for some time the half-starved life of the bandit, defying capture by hurling stones down upon their enemies if they pursued them.

There were agonising remembrances of the raids for the *corvée* or forced labour gangs, and for the army, when parents were left broken-hearted, knowing that it was almost impossible that they could ever see their sons—taken to worse than slavery—alive again.

If Lord Cromer's name is remembered with gratitude by such men as these, it is because he was known to be the deadly enemy of corruption, and was the man who broke the last sign of the vicious power of the bad old Pasha days.

It was Lord Cromer who ensured the revenues for national uses, abolished the *corvée*, and turned the army service from a curse into a national blessing. No mother wails now, and tears her hair, when her boy goes off to the army, for she knows that—inshallah (God willing)—he will return, a well-set up lad, with some education, and with a little money in his pocket, a hero for the

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

PLOUGHING IN EGYPT BY A METHOD WHICH GOES BACK TO THE DAYS OF THE PATRIARCHS.

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time in the eyes of the village. Not that one can say the compulsory service is popular, even now—it will be evaded if there is a chance—but it is not the black evil thing it once was. Many a baby boy was blinded by his mother in the days of Mohammed Ali to save him from the tyrant's service.

As for the old collector of taxes, what was here said of him reminded me of the description of an Englishman written from Egypt sixty years ago.

"Having collected the sum required, he retires from the scene, hugging himself in the hope that he can keep back a reasonable proportion. But the inevitable whip (nabout) again comes into play, and a higher official (Nazir) avenges the poor fellah in the most satisfactory way. To this tune the dollars travel gently towards the treasury in Cairo, and used of old to arrive about in time to buy Miss Nefeesa a necklace of pearls, or Madame Nazlet a service of plate from Storr & Mortimer's—as now to furnish a succession of flimsy palaces, or provide an elegant campanella for the vice-royal breed of pigeons."

Happily, under the present regime, the palaces are almost all being used as schools—of art, of commerce, for secondary education, and as administrative offices.

We spoke of present-day commercial honesty, and in this it was lamented that things in the country had changed for the worse. A landlord present said that when his father died they had not a single written lease for any of their land, and there were no arrears of rent. Now they have papers for every yard of land, drawn up by the city *avocat*, but farmers are defaulting, and have of late learnt from Levantine scoundrels, who infest this country, the clever trick of bankruptcy, as a way of escap-

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ing the payment of their just debts. Well might these men lament the days when a certain man (the story is well authenticated) was known to have bought a number of standing crops from different farmers, and paid in advance. His receipts were burnt by fire, but in every case the crops were delivered at the proper time.

It is a common charge against Oriental people that the truth is not in them, and moral critics do not hesitate to say that the religion of Islam is to blame for this. I did not hesitate to question responsible men (here in the village, as in other places), including a number of sheikhs, as to their opinions on this subject. The result may be concentrated in this way. The Moslems have not only the precepts of the Koran, but the example of their Prophet, to encourage them to follow the truth.

All through his life Mohammed was respected as a man of truth. From early days he was nicknamed "the trusty," and when Khadijah married him she said, "I take thee because of the respect with which the people regard thee, for thy honesty, for the beauty of thy character, and for the truthfulness of thy speech." A contemporary Christian (the day of European abuse did not come till later on), in writing of the Prophet's mission, said, "Mohammed appeared to his people and brought them together in a union of law, and forsaking vain idols, they returned to the living God. He bid them not to . . . drink wine, or to tell a lie, or to commit fornication."

When he was faced by the opponents of his mission in the first days of his preaching in Mecca, Mohammed appealed to the men of the Quraish (guardians of the Kaaba) who knew him best, as to his character amongst them. "We have ever found thee a speaker of the

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truth," was his enemies' tribute. And all through the Koran his followers are exhorted to "shun the word of falsehood" (Sura xxii. 31), to act fairly even towards their enemies (Sura lx. 8), and to be faithful to their trusts.

The Moslem religion teaches the extreme heinousness of a false oath, sworn intentionally. It is a sin so grievous that no expiation can wipe it out, but only true repentance.

I have before remarked that what is often roughly described as lying should be regarded as an evasion of the necessity of appearing ungracious. Often when a request is made to the Oriental he will promise to fulfil it in a way that to those who know them well is at once seen to be a polite evasion to avoid the discourtesy of saying, "I will not," or "I can not." Such unwillingness to appear unwilling is among Arabs a frequent source of innocent deceptions, if deceptions indeed they can be called, like the "not at home" of our own land: whoever has to do with Eastern people should be prepared for them and take them good-naturedly.

There is another sort of untruth which is sometimes puzzling and irritating to Europeans. A poor woman was shown some beautiful jewels by an Englishwoman, and when she had admired them, she declared that she too had jewels at home of great value. This statement, so easily labelled as a stupid lie, it was proved, she had made out of consideration for the Englishwoman, to relieve her mind from the thought that her possessions were envied; for envy brings the terrible Evil Eye. And the boasting was really a form of politeness.

Against this evil the words of Sura cxiii. are often worn as a charm; and when in fear of it, the words will

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be recited: "I fly for refuge unto the Lord . . . that He may deliver me . . . from the mischief of the envious when he envieth."

It is this superstition which leads them into a sort of deception which has no intention in it of imposing on human beings at all. You order, for instance, a new boom for your boat, and when you go to see it, your heart sinks to find it with a splice, as though it had already been broken. Such a fine new boom, your dragoman tells you, would be sure to attract the Evil Eye, with direst consequences, and so the fates must be hoodwinked in this way.

There is always a peculiar interest to Europeans in the talk of Oriental people, as they develop qualities, even in casual conversation, which spice almost every sentence with an element of surprise, appealing to a love of humour, as well as of literary style. I have spoken of the proverbs, of which they have an immense store, made available by the wonderful Arab memory in all conversation. They have in addition a great faculty in the use of pictorial language, and they show the keenest enjoyment in verbal and quiet practical jokes.

They light upon the happiest sayings, and a facility of narration and illustration is constantly met with. Palgrave, as an instance, in his travels in Arabia, came upon the waters of a quiet bay; the Arabs had named it "Bahr-ul-Benāt," or the "Girls' Sea," for the reason, I imagine, that they considered it did not require a man's powers to navigate it.

The very street-cries have a touch of poetry. The men crying cucumbers sing of them as "fruit gathered by sweet girls, in the garden, with the early dew."

The whimsicality of these people comes out at every

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turn. "The camel was asked, 'In what are you skilful?' He replied, 'Winding silk!'" as though any conceivable creature could be less capable of the deft and supple skill required for that operation. An instance of this drollery in their common proverbs is—"The monkey's mother thinks him a gazelle." "I used to think Arabs prosaic till I could understand a little of their language," says Lady Duff Gordon, "but now I can trace the genealogy of Don Quixote straight up to some Sheikh-el-Arab."

It is this use of pictorial language, in the form of fables, in some of the early Traditions, that has led Western critics (like the Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall) into criticism that would be unjust, if the lack of humour and understanding of the imaginative Oriental mind, which could turn these verbal extravagances into literal weapons of attack, did not bear their own condemnation.

It was Al Ghazzali, the early theologian of Islam, who, in writing of the Divine Nature, said "that an ant's weight should not escape Him, either in earth or in heaven; but He would know the creeping of the black ant in the dark night upon the hard stone."

"When Adam fell in Ceylon," says another tradition, "he kept on weeping and wailing and lamenting for his offence for two hundred years, so that from his tears rivers began to flow, and on their banks there grew dates and cloves and nutmeg-trees. From Eve's tears were produced henna and collyrium and indigo. Every one of her tears which fell into the sea became a pearl, and these her daughters take as their heritage."

In the same book (*Qisasul'l Anbiya*) it is said that the Prophet told his people that the earth was originally made out of the foam of a wave, which God created

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from a gigantic pearl, and that He made the pearl out of primitive darkness.

Our village talk one day turned upon slaves, and the stern opinions held by Europeans about Islam in connection with slave-owning in Eastern lands. The historic fact is that Islam brought hope to the slaves, although its traducers sometimes speak as though it invented slavery. The first Koranic word on the subject is to reprove the rich for their treatment of slaves, and for the first time in history to enjoin such consideration and kindness as practically made the slave a member of his master's family, to be treated as one of his own children. "And your slaves! See that ye feed them with such food as ye eat yourselves, and clothe them with the stuff ye wear . . . for they are the servants of the Lord. . . . Know that all Moslems are brothers unto one another," said Mohammed in his address in Mecca on his farewell pilgrimage.

Abu Bekr, the Prophet's friend, believing the kindly rules in this matter established by Mohammed to be the will of heaven, spent nearly all his large fortune to purchase slaves, to free them from the religious persecution of their masters on account of their adherence to the teaching of Islam. Bilal, the faithful negro, who first sang the famous call to prayer, and who added the words to the early morning call, "Prayer is better than sleep," was one of these slaves who found equality, and the path to freedom, in the new religion. One of the stated purposes of the alms, which are enjoined on every Moslem, is for the benefit of slaves who wish to buy their freedom and have not the means for so doing.

To this day the true Moslem regards it as a great

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virtue, particularly pleasing to God, to grant freedom to his slaves—in this way he will mark some happy domestic celebration, or he will join this virtue to repentance for sin and preparation for death. The Senussi brotherhood, whose mysterious existence in the desert beyond Tripoli and Tunisia gives rise to ever-recurring speculation as to their purpose in resisting European aggressions on Islam, are known to buy slaves very largely, with the sole purpose of bringing them under the influence of their religion.

The friends with whom we were staying had not only freed their slaves long since, but Halima, their foster-nurse, had for many years enjoyed the happy life of a pensioner, and, above all, as I have said, had accompanied her master and mistress to Mecca as a friend. We heard of a sheikh who some time ago married his only daughter to a slave, refusing other offers, because the lad "was the best man he knew." A recognition of equality like this is greater than the granting of freedom.

And these freed slaves have never found their origin an "invidious bar" to their attainment of the very highest posts to which their natural talents entitled them. Egypt itself has had a negro ruler "of deep black colour with a smooth shining skin," who rose to be an excellent Governor, from the position of a slave. Kafur had shown himself to be equally great as a soldier and a statesman, and his dominion extended not only over Egypt, but Syria also. Bagdad also had a negro caliph.

There have been periods when men have partly forgotten or have ignored the humane laws of their early religion, and have been cruel to their slaves and

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captives, but Islam must not be blamed for this. In Turkey and in Persia particularly the depravity which seems natural to man has often obscured the best features of a religion to which a formal adherence has been given. As Mr. Gladstone once remarked, it is not a question of religion simply, "but Mohammedanism compounded with the peculiar character of a race."

Christian captives have often been treated in such a way that the teachings of Christ must have seemed to the slaves like a mockery of their hopeless misery. Sir William Stirling Maxwell, speaking of the condition of the galley slaves, says, "The poor wretches who tugged at the oar on board a Turkish ship of war lived a life neither more nor less miserable than the galley slaves under the sign of the Cross." If we go to Arabia, where we are closer to the practice of the first teachings of Islam, we find, in Palgrave's words, that slavery to this day, as practised in that country, "has little but the name in common with the system hell-branded by those atrocities of the Western Hemisphere."

Christian people are asked to remember how difficult it was to root out slavery in their own lands. As late as the tenth century the traffic was in full activity between England and Ireland—the port of Bristol being one of its principal centres. In the Canons of a Council in London in 1102 it was ordered that no one from henceforth presume to carry on that wicked traffic by which men in England have hitherto been sold like brute-beasts.

In Christian Spain the Moslems were hailed as deliverers by the miserable slaves they found there under Gothic rule. Many centuries later, England, under the Assientio contract with Spain, which had long

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ago driven out the Saracen, enjoyed the monopoly of the traffic in slaves for thirty years. The stipulation being that from the first day of May 1713 to the first day of May 1743, we were to have the exclusive privilege of transporting negroes into the Spanish West Indies at the rate of four thousand eight hundred a year.

The truth is, that for generations Christian people, even those descended from Huguenot and Puritan ancestry, were trained to believe that they had been endowed by heaven with the right to enslave the poor African; men like Whitfield, the evangelist, had no scruple in the matter of holding slaves.

The spirit of the Gospel eventually triumphed, and the abolition of the slave trade has become a proud boast of Christian people. Many Moslems admire the spirit which made this great advance in the cause of humanity possible, and look forward to the day when the great work which Mohammed did for the slaves, whom he found downtrodden and wretched, shall be consummated by the world-wide freedom of men from the yoke of servitude. It should surely be the desire of Christian people to help them forward towards such an ideal. In the meantime, especially remembering our own history, we should be careful not to misjudge Islam in this matter.

As an educated sheikh said to me, "Some of your writers seem to suggest that it was from Islam that the most notorious slave-raiders of recent times have sprung. So far as we are guilty in this matter we are ashamed, and can only say that we repudiate the character which can take to such an occupation for the sake of gain. On the other hand, it is a fair-minded Englishman who has stated that it was the introduc-

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tion of Islam into Central and West Africa that has been the most important, if not the sole, preservative, against the desolations of the slave trade. Islam furnished a protection to the tribes who embraced it by effectually binding them together in one strong religious fraternity, and enabling them by their united efforts to baffle the attempts of powerful slave-hunters." The sheikh was quoting from Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole.

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CHAPTER IV

" The same life is uniformly pursued by the roving tribes of the desert; and in the portrait of the modern Bedoweens, we may trace the features of their ancestors, who in the age of Moses or Mohamet, dwelt under similar tents, and conducted their horses, and camels, and sheep, to the same springs, and the same pastures."

Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. ix. p. 223.

One memorable afternoon we rode out to a bedouin village in the sand hills, a few miles distant, to visit the sheikh—or chief man—who was a friend, to see the making of the special tent cloth which these Arabs of the desert are skilled in weaving from camel's hair and wool.

We found the village to consist almost entirely of a large permanent encampment of tents, pitched in the clean yellow sand, and making comfortable habitations. The sheikh came out to meet us with ancient Arab courtesy—a fine genial man, who has evidently won, and knows how to retain, the affectionate adherence of his clan. With him we walked through the village, and called at several of the tents—finding them all arranged on a proper plan for sleeping, cooking, and eating, the deep dry desert sand ensuring the most perfect cleanliness—being everywhere received with almost embarrassing hospitality, which even went so far as to suggest the making of a special tabernacle there so as to retain us. To our surprise we found that, although an encampment of tents, the village is an ancient one, as the adjacent burial-place, for one thing, proved.

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The people of this village are a handsome and hardy race, disease being almost unknown amongst them. The men possess all the Arab skill in the management of horses, and once a year at a great moolid (or birthday celebration) of their particular saint, they hold a fantasia, at which marvels of pluck and skill are exhibited by famous nomad riders from all parts of Egypt.

I have seen one of these desert fantasias, and the marvels of riding by the Arab horsemen. The great feature is the perfect sympathy there is between the rider and his horse, so perfect that the man and his beast seem to have but one thought and one impulse. These Arab horses, as a great horseman has remarked, have a delicacy not so much of mouth, for it is a common thing to ride them without bit or bridle, but of feeling of obedience to the knee and thigh, to slightest check of the halter and the voice of the rider, far surpassing whatever the most elaborate *manège* gives a European horse, though furnished with snaffle, curb, and all.

The children are charming, in no way shy, though gentle as fawns. One beautiful little boy of about five sidled up to me and took my hand—a dear silent little man with eyes of the desert gazelle—an orphan, they told me, and the charge of a family in no way related to him.

"Might I steal him and take him to England?"

"Yes," said the sheikh; "it would be an act acceptable to God, to educate a poor orphan. But you must give an English promise not to change his religion!"

By this time—for labour in the village and fields had ended with the setting sun—almost all the inhabitants were gathered, and were taking furtive glances at us, their courtesy so superior to their curiosity, however,

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that they were never obtrusive. At last one man did approach the sheikh, and in a quiet voice asked if he thought we objected to the people walking with us. "Of course not." The chief humorously told him that, as we had come to see them, he was sure we should not object to their looking at us!

Now it became dark, but for the light of the moon, which soon shone brilliantly with a lustre peculiar to the Eastern sky. We had arrived at the front of the chief's house, where a number of the very fine tent cloths were brought for our inspection. They are of amazing strength and durability, and are waterproof by the natural quality of the camel's hair of which they are made. The tone of colour is produced by a combination of black and brown with dark red, some of the cloths having white strips in the place of the black.

The cloths were now spread on the sand, and we squatted there with the sheikh and his immediate friends, while at a short distance round about sat groups of the men and children of the village, to the number of from one hundred to a hundred and fifty, quietly observing and discussing us. From group to group the little children trotted, two or three finding their way, from the arms of the sheikh, who was evidently a father to them all, on to my knees.

Coffee appeared, and the chief repeated to us all the compliments with which he had greeted us, in poetic language, which made us ashamed of the poor prose of our response.

The whole scene was deeply impressive, unforgettable—for the spell of that Egyptian moon over it all was pure magic, possessing power to transport us from

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the prosaic world to a fairy realm—an Arabian night indeed.

At last the moment came to depart, for we had been obliged to resist all the pressure put upon us to stay till after the night prayer and partake of a feast. But we had promised to be home in time for dinner. Before I got up, I felt in my pocket for some half-piastres (an Egyptian coin worth a penny-farthing) for the small children. I gave in all about five of these small coins. It was a *faux pas* on my part, which could be instantly felt. One or two grave men went quietly behind the sheikh to speak something in his ear. Superstition told us, from the dead silence which ensued, that armies were walking over our graves! Then I asked—

"What is it? What is wrong?"

"Sir, the men think it is a little shameful to give money to the children!"

"Why? Surely I may be permitted to give pleasure to the little ones!"

"But it puts wrong thoughts into their heads!"

I pleaded that it was the English custom. Remembrance of Arab pride came into my mind; these men were thinking I had given these small gifts because I thought they were needed.

"It is for nothing but for the children to buy sweet things!"

This settled the matter; the *amour propre* was restored, and we all smiled benevolently upon each other again.

An incident like this shows how unjust the "bachsheesh" charge is when it is spread over the whole people of Egypt. The disease was created by Europeans, as is proved by the fact that it is unknown away from the track which the tourist has beaten. It is obvious how

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

A VILLAGE SCENE IN EGYPT: THRESHING THE CORN.

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deeply these men felt a matter when they could make a protest to one of the rare guests of their village, to whom they had shown every consideration, and offered all they possessed.

Now we mounted; made many adieus; received many benedictions, and—so that the Arabian night should not yet be closed—found that we were to be accompanied to the boundary of our own parish by a mounted escort, ostentatiously armed with guns! I need not say how enjoyable the ride home in the moonlight proved to be.

One morning of our stay, knowing that I desired to see one of the chicken-rearing houses peculiar to Egypt, our host took us to a neighbouring village, where the establishment of a certain Copt makes the place a centre of a large neighbourhood for this industry. The hatching of eggs by artificial heat has been an art for which Egypt has been famous from remotest antiquity, and in which, to this day, it is the Copt, the descendant of the ancient Egyptian—and not the Arab—who shows amazing skill.

The incubating house we visited was a long, low chamber, with ten ovens, five on each side, with a three-foot passage between them, running from one end of the room to the other, each oven being capable of taking four thousand eggs. The oven is on the level of the floor, and the fire chamber is above it, with its primitive chimney going straight out of the roof.

The business is conducted in Upper Egypt in the following way: At a given time, which is made known far and near, people bring their eggs, which the owner of the oven buys outright for money.

The general heat maintained in the oven during the

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process of incubation is from 100° to 103° Fahrenheit. Lane speaks of the operator knowing by instinct the exact temperature required for success without having any instrument like a thermometer to guide him. This man informed me that it is by putting one of the eggs into his eye-socket that he judges of the temperature. For forty days the operator practically lives night and day in his sealed house—even the chimneys are only opened occasionally to let out the smoke.

The Copts are not famous for instincts of cleanliness and order. My wonder was that the Pharonic dirt and cobwebs in this hatching chamber did not smother the owner; the heat, I was sure, could not compete with them in the process. Our visit, however, cleared a low tunnel through the gauzy festoons of filth, for although we tried to avoid a great part of it by walking almost on all fours, we were still covered with a cobweb-garment when we had regained the wholesome sunlight.

The eggs are first put into the ovens, and the fire above is lighted, great care being necessary in the tending of the fires. After fifteen days a careful examination is made of the eggs. By this time the fires have been allowed to die down, and the fertile eggs are laid in the warm ashes to complete the hatching process.

While the owner is imprisoned in the chamber, his son (or other partner) is making a tour of all the villages in that part of the country, going from house to house, asking if the women wish to take chickens—and if so, how many—on the understanding that they rear them, and return to him twenty full-grown fowls for every hundred chickens received. The cottager takes all risks, and failing the production of the proper number of fowls, must pay the twenty per cent. in money, estimated

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at the market price of fowls at the time. The incubating merchant sells his fowls to the rich houses, where there is always a large daily consumption, or sends them to the cities. It is a serious thing to differ from Lane in any particular, but no one in this village knew anything of the methods he describes. For instance, he says the owner of the oven pays nothing for the eggs in money, but returns one chicken for every two eggs he takes. The difference, I imagine, may be between the customs of Upper and Lower Egypt. Near Cairo I found that the owner of the ovens sells the chickens outright to those who rear them; or in some cases there is a middle-man who buys all the chickens outright from certain ovens and himself arranges the farming of them out for rearing.

On another evening of our stay my young friend and I slipped away from the general company in our house to sit with the peasants of the village in the lowly café. Here, it must be said, the talk was coarse, with many oaths, and the stories told were gross and indelicate, while there was not a suggestion that anyone was conscious of a level of decency which for the time being they were setting at defiance. In no country, of course, does one go to the taproom of the village inn for choice conversation.

The owner of the place was certainly not growing rich on what his customers consumed, for some of the gentlemen present seemed not to be even aware of "the good of the house," which in the village inn must not be lost sight of, even though it does not go beyond the pot of "four 'alf." The tiny cup of coffee, paid for in a coin of such small value that travellers never see it, as they are supposed to have no use for it; whiffs at a

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hubble-bubble pipe passed round the circle; this was the extent of their patronage of "mine host."

The talk was very vivacious, for even the gross humours were touched with that imaginativeness which gives a glow to Oriental speech, while the constant play upon words, and the whimsical conceit, give the humour of the peasant that faculty of sometimes producing an explosive climax, which is very laughter-compelling. For the rest, their conversation over their cups—of coffee—is much the same as that of land-labourers of the same class of any country—the crops, the master, the coming moolid, who is going or returning from Mecca, the exact sum of money, to a milliem, and the exact amount of land, to a yard, possessed by this and that neighbour—this they always know—the best sheikh to apply to for charms for this and that purpose. Always with this difference in the talk from that of northern labourers, that the weather, in Egypt, needs no discussion.

The place of the weather in conversation is taken by that first of all topics, the river Nile, for which the fellah naturally has a deep veneration. They tell singular things of sub-fluvial affairs, and know the precise situations of the cities of many of the fairy realms in the depths of the water. The King of Fishes holds his Court in one place; the King of the Crocodiles in another; whilst near the Rosetta mouth is the liquid realm of the mermen, who now and then manage to catch from above a human being, whom they place on show in a cage, carefully pointing out to the grinning mermen who crowd to see the latest wonder, that the strange animal has got no tail! The Egyptian Arabs believe that all the insects and reptiles were

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

A Village Scene: Drawing Water from the Nile for Irrigation Purposes.

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produced at the Creation from the mud of the Nile, and that man himself, under the hand of the Almighty Artist, developed into beauty and life from the same material.

At the season of inundation, naturally, the talk will be all of the rising flood, which, however, is not now such a matter of speculation as formerly, for the mayor even of this small village is actually connected by telephone with the centres of information, and the daily bulletins of the river reach him. The theory of the rising of the Nile, which has been held possibly for thousands of years, is in no way disturbed by such modern invention. About Midsummer—on "the Night of the Drop"—a drop of dew of magic power is created in heaven and is put into the Nile, to cause the blessed swelling of the waters. Many of the simple people watch for this divine miracle, and, of course, many are convinced that they have seen the magic drop, like a falling star, dart into the southern part of the river.

Weather or no weather to be discussed, it can be seen that the talk of the village café need not flag for want of topics of vital interest to the community.

On the way home, my friend and I discussed the question of the introduction of strong drink into the villages. There are scoundrels—mostly Greek or Italian—always going about in the country seeking an opening to spread the ruin and shame which follows the institution of a drink-shop. But for the sturdy influence of our host's family, there would have been one of these little hells established here long since.

Every traveller—to the most casual—must know how the whisky-bottle is flaunted in what is always

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the most prosperous-looking shop of nearly every village, as far south as Khartoum. The fellah, if he gets a taste for strong drink—forbidden in his religion, he has no hereditary preparation for its ravages—hastens on the downward path, and will pledge and mortgage everything he possesses for it. It is the grog-seller, too, who lies in wait for his own victims in the double guise of pawnbroker and the landgrabber. Incredible stories are told of fortunes made in this way by men who landed at Alexandria from Europe with nothing more than a chestnut brazier as stock in trade, and now are become magnates in Cairo.

Is no protection possible from the Government? The whisky advertisements with which Egypt and the Soudan are disfigured are a reproach to our British name. All the well-known firms seem to be concentrating on forcing a market for their wares in this region. I came across the track of their "travellers" in every place. There is no official ignorance to cover the failure to act in this matter. Lord Cromer stated in his great book on Egypt that "it is the low-class Greek who undermines that moral quality of which the Moslem, when untainted by European association, has in some degree a speciality. That quality is sobriety."

We do not stay out late in the country, for (apart from the fear of ginn) these young men and youths must rise early. With our own English morning habits we hear, as we lie in bed, while it is still quite dark, the call to prayer from the minaret of the mosque near by, and know that it is the signal for all men of toil, or of Moslem piety, to arise.

During all my stay in the village I never once crossed the threshold of the great house in which my

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host and his family reside. I saw the children of the two brothers who are married, but I never saw their wives, although I have no doubt that from the many windows of the hareem there were no comings and goings from our house which were not closely observed.

My wife visited the ladies in the hareem, and found them bright and full of interest in life; they have the care of the house and the children, they are skilled in needlework, and at times there is much visiting and receiving of friends from neighbouring villages. They observe the prayers, and receive visits from a venerable sheikh, who instructs them in matters of religion. Like all Egyptian ladies of rank, they take great pride in their jewels. And a woman's practised eye judged their indoor costumes to betray a fashionable cut that spells expense in Cairo.

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CHAPTER V

"How you would love the Arab women in the country villages . . . such sweet, graceful beings, all smiles and grace. . . . It is the true poetical pastoral life of the Bible in the villages where the English have not been."

Lady Duff Gordon, *Letters from Egypt*, pp. 35–36.

I SAW, of course, a good deal of the life of the poor womenfolk of the fellaheen. The fellaha is hard worked, for in addition to bearing and nurturing the many children—which are so ardently desired and prayed for in all parts of Egypt—she cooks the frugal meals, grinds the corn, and makes the bread. She takes a sensible part in the work of the fields, and, above all, is the household water-carrier from the river or canal.

It is she who beats the millet and the maize from the sheath, to turn it into the coarse cakes which form so great a part of the family diet. To the Arab Moslem bread is sacred, and must not be wasted. Even crumbs are taken up. Wheaten bread is not for the likes of the fellaheen. Meat they rarely have, except on the great feast days, when mutton is a necessity, to get which stint and economy is practised for half a year. Occasionally a little fish is brought from the Nile, which is quite good. They have a fowl now and then, stewed in the pot, with rice, which is eaten very frequently. The tiny eggs of Egypt are boiled hard, to be eaten with a chunk of hard bread; if a small piece of the soft white cheese can be added, and a radish, it is a meal fit for a Pasha.

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The fellaha is accomplished in producing the most fragrant and appetising messes of beans and lentils with herbs; for the Arab love of pungent flavouring is only equalled by his passion for scents. As he has no name for scentless flowers, so he ignores all green things that are wanting in a distinct flavour. In all classes certain vegetables are eaten raw; at a great banquet, for instance, large white radishes will be offered you, and it will be thought peculiar that you eat the radish in preference to the long green leaves!

The fellaheen eat radishes very largely, as their remotest ancestors must have done; in the food accounts of the slaves who laboured on the Pyramids, found a few years since, one of the chief items was for radishes.

Small cucumbers are cooked as a vegetable; but above all green things the Egyptian dotes on bamyia, a small rough kind of vegetable, shaped like a finger, which, to cheat the seasons, is even dried until it looks like a yellow bead, and then threaded. The native greengrocer shops have quantities of these strings of dried bamyia hung up outside. I was not surprised when a lady appeared at dinner, in Shepheard's Hotel, in Cairo, last winter, wearing one of these strings of bamyia as a necklace—she thought she had found a purely native article of adornment, which was "so quaint and Oriental." The Egyptian student in England hungers for bamyia—I know those who even have supplies sent from home. The onion (and garlic, to a lesser degree) are much appreciated, though many Moslems, thinking of the Prophet's detestation of the smell of them, will only eat them when they can be sure of washing mouth and hands at once, especially if prayer-time be near; they believe the odour will

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cause the guardian angels to stay at a distance from them, and thus they would lose their good offices. The turnip they often eat raw, as also that so-called tomato, which, with its greenness and thick skin, is a disgrace to this fertile land: I never saw a really luscious tomato in Egypt or the Soudan.

Sugar-cane they chew and suck at every opportunity: nature seems to have produced a craving for this food, only to be eaten with such labour as makes the unaccustomed jaw ache to distraction—a craving which will lead the most cultured Egyptian occasionally to indulge himself, though, like the ladies of Cranford with an orange, gentility requires strict privacy for the inelegant operation.

The water-melon is justly regarded as one of the chief blessings of Allah for the hot season; its secrets of cool refreshment are one of the miracles of nature. Dates as a luxury hold the first place—and the children contend for the privilege of sucking the stones; when the dates become dried as hard as marbles they are still sought after.

Like the Jews, the Moslems refrain from things strangled and from blood. Meat and game, to be acceptable, must have the right formula pronounced over it at the slaying—even when it is the victim of sport of gun or rod; and it must be eaten on the day of slaughter, heedless of resulting toughness, which, to alien digestion, is one of the chief trials of a stay with native folk. Though vegetable is sometimes eaten raw, meat of all kinds must always be well cooked. Our English idea of redness necessary in roast beef is so repugnant to Egyptian ideas that a young friend of mine, keeping the fast of Rhamadan last summer in London,

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went to bed with his fast practically unbroken from the previous night rather than taste the underdone beef offered him for dinner in a Bloomsbury *pension*, the apple tart which followed being equally distasteful to him.

The fellaha is, like most other village women, a great gossip—an indulgence which is one of those gildings of the bitter pill of life, according to the kindly precept of old Samuel Johnson, which are to be regarded complacently. She says her prayers privately, and longs for the Pilgrimage, or at least to touch the Mahmal in Cairo, or to pray at a great saint's tomb there, as much as does her husband. To think the contrary of all this is the almost universal error of Christian critics of Islam.

Occasionally she seeks the spiritual advice of an aged sheikh, perhaps some miles away, and from him gets amulets and little leather satchels to string upon herself and her children, in which are enclosed verses from the Holy Koran known to be potent against the Evil Eye, the ginn, and the devices of the devil by day and by night.

She knows that her husband is her rightful master, for the Koran tells her, with its divine authority, that man's natural qualities exalt him "a step above" the woman, giving him permission to chastise her if she is disobedient. As a rule, her husband is affectionate to her and the children, and on his part remembers the constant injunction of the Koran to treat his wife with "love and tenderness—one of the true signs of God" (Sura xxx. 20).

Her chief dread—perhaps more than divorce—is that a second wife may be brought into the household. Polygamy is rare in Egypt. The census shows, for one

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thing, that the population of Egypt is almost equally divided between male and female. Indeed, it is almost solely among the fellaheen that polygamy survives, the motive generally being to increase a man's progeny, with its chances of wage-earning in the fields, as a means of keeping off the wolf which here growls too often very close to the poor man's door.

She is generally an obedient and willing helpmate to her lord, training her children to join her in paying him the deference which the Eastern father receives in the home.

For some strange reason, however, the old widow women often develop into dreadful shrews, who seem, as a pastime, to seek to stir up village brawls. Their power to screech provocative insults at all and sundry is amazing. As a rule, there is a kind of understanding amongst the men that the ancient shrew has some sort of privilege which guards her from the suppression which would be exerted over a younger woman.

Without education, except that gained in the kuttab (or Koran school), a little laborious writing and reading, some memorising of their holy writ, the fellah boy is early set to work. Gradually, however, the scope of education is being widened in Egypt. I have visited some excellent village schools which carry education far beyond that of the kuttab. The fellah is lowly in mind, and never questions his lot, for he thinks God ordained it. He is as simple as a child, with a liability to the child's gusts of passion and capacity for heartrending grief. He worships goodness in others when he finds it, and has some really fine instincts of love and devotion to those whom God has set over him, if they show any sort of interest in his well-being. That his

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desires are limited is shown by the fact that he can find happiness in his infinitesimal means. The natural dignity of man rarely deserts him, and clothes him with a winning and saving grace; it is nurtured by his religion, which teaches him, through that constant link with heaven, maintained by the guardian angels who are always by his side, a self-respect sometimes merging into a pride that is a little repellent to men of other creeds, who come into contact with him without caring to understand or sympathise.

It is difficult for some people to realise that the fellah is not a barbarian or a savage, or even a blood-thirsty fanatic, lying in wait to ferociously demand the protestation of his faith at the end of a dagger. Solicitous relatives of my own, knowing that I have a predilection for remote village life in Moslem lands, judging from what they have heard from other travellers—"as a fact," of course—have warned me against such imaginary ogres who lie in wait for Christians with the Koran in one hand and a raised sword in the other.

The dark and fusty hovels in which the poor live, the soil-stained, trailing garments of the women—who of all misfortunes to their personal appearance are condemned to wear black in a country where one of the plagues is dust—the primitive ideas, as old as the early scriptural injunctions in matters sanitary, lead the fastidious European to label these people as creatures degraded by filth.

In this matter a fair judgment cannot be made from outward appearances. Let the habits of bodily washing of the labouring classes of any of the nations which supply these critics be compared with those of Moslem folk, bound (men and women) by the ablutions which

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precede their prayers, with some just allowance for lack of advance in other matters, and I think the balance will be in favour of the fellaheen.

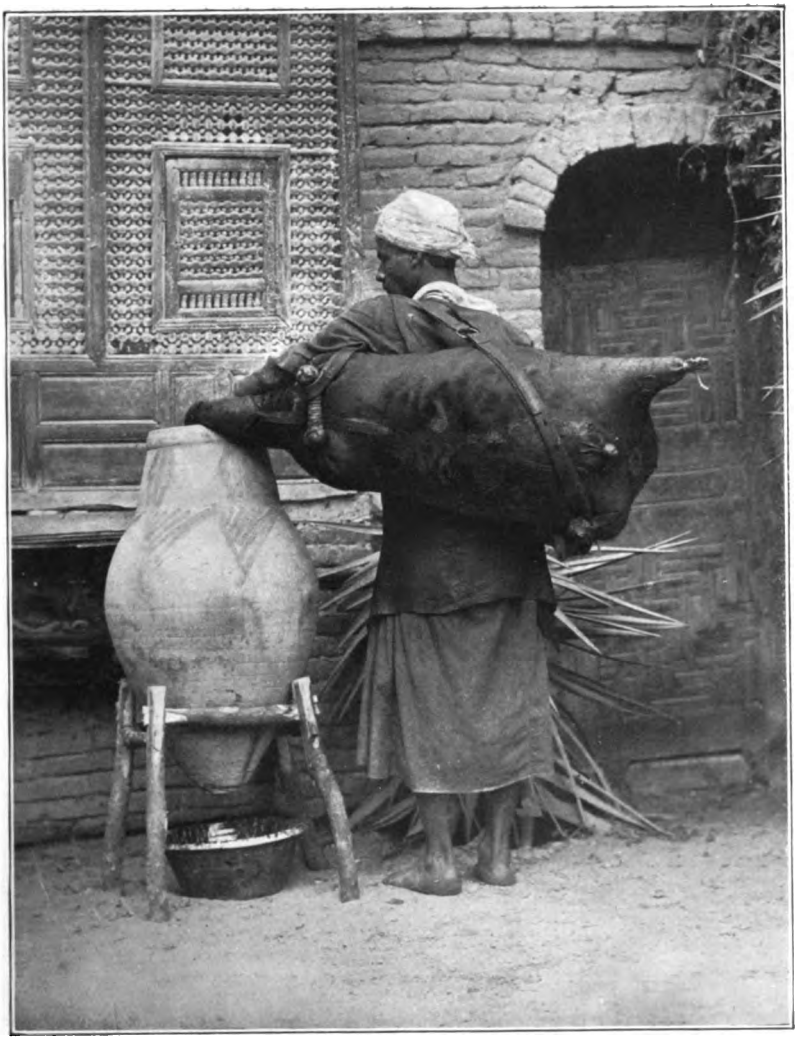
I dislike such crude comparisons, but I cannot forget that a doctor at one of the London hospitals once told me he found that the majority of the poorer patients had never been washed over the whole of their bodies for years, some from babyhood. Could anything more perfectly ensure bodily cleanliness, than the daily washing of parts of, and the weekly ablution of the whole human frame, demanded by the Islamic religion. Of the feet alone the daily washing must particularly reach between every toe.

Objectionable insects thrive in such a climate; even in Cairo, as a doctor friend of mine humorously remarked, the "*pulex irritans* is entitled to even official recognition about the middle of April"; and indeed there is warrant for the unbroken heritage of all the insect "plagues of Egypt."

But lest in this matter I should be thought unduly lenient, I will fall back upon a quotation from the words of the same keen observer of the poor labourer of the Nile valley whom I have previously mentioned.

"Clean poverty and healthy misery are not to be met with every day, either in Egypt or elsewhere. A starving bird neglects to polish his feathers, and a famished dog has a ragged coat. However, it must not be supposed that the fellah is a disgusting animal. With the greatest respect for suffering, wherever it may be found, I must say that Northern poverty is far more repulsive than Egyptian; and that there are thousands of garrets in England infinitely fuller of terrors to those whose senses enjoy an unjust monopoly of refinement, than the most

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

THE DAILY VISIT OF THE WATER-CARRIER.

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wretched Arab hovel. . . . And the wretchedest fellah, in his normal state of poverty, if not a more respectable, is a more approachable being than the outcast of European civilisation."

Beyond the slight moral teaching gained at the kuttab—and this is mostly by deduction from Koranic precepts, and the advice of the father, which counts for more perhaps than has been realised by Christian critics—the deplorable absence of training for the young leads one to wonder how any degree of moral decency is attained. As someone says: "God knows their goodness is all their own, there is no one to teach them."

A consciousness of the need of moral teaching is spreading in Egypt, however, and I hope a proper care of the youth of the villages may be the outcome. When I think of the social club, and the boy scouts and brigades, the Sunday schools and the night classes, and all the social service which reaches the remotest hamlet in England, I wonder what it is that saves the Egyptian boy, in any degree, from perdition; and from what source is drawn the inspiration of that real nobility of character, so often found in the older Moslem men? I have met many a man in the East whose character I could thoroughly admire, and whose advice I valued; and who, of those who have lived there, has not had the same experience?

To speak of the moral bankruptcy of Islam, and never to suggest that a solvent soul is possible to it, as Mr. Zwemer does (in *Islam: a Challenge to Faith*), betrays bias or ignorance. I think of a Christian woman who in Egypt became almost entirely dependent in a mortal illness on an Arab servant. He was offered every

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inducement to leave his mistress, even the dignity of royal service with our Prince of Wales (when the late King Edward was visiting Egypt), with pay far beyond his mistress's means. This is what she wrote of him: "When I know, as I now do thoroughly, all Omar's complete integrity—without any sort of mention of it—his going ragged and shabby to save his money for his wife and child (a very great trial to a good-looking young Arab), and the equally unostentatious love he has shown to me, and the delicacy and real nobleness of feeling which comes out so oddly in the midst of sayings, which to our ideas seem very shabby and time-serving, very often I wonder if there is anything as good in the civilised West."

There is a great deal in the religion of Islam which teaches consideration for others, and leads to gentleness and simplicity of conduct, which, with a remarkable absence of censoriousness, produces what we call gentlemen. And no national decadence, or falling behind in the race for intellectual and material attainment and advantage, has obliterated this. The men of the family with whom we are staying, in the culture of mind they show in all the relationships of life—and I speak now after a friendship which ripened into close intimacy—recalled for me the fine qualities which marked the early Moslems.

Here was a father and five sons, living together in a patriarchal dignity, the father ruling with a firm and wise benevolence, and the sons filling their part with filial respect and affection, all conscious of their duty to their dependants and their neighbours, following a family tradition of many generations. They are known as men faithful to their word, whatever may be the

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cost, and equally faithful to their self-respect, whatever the inducements to depart from it. The Bey would have been a Pasha, when titles were on sale, if he had not possessed qualities above the temptations of personal aggrandisement—in the East a sore temptation indeed. It was my happiness with these friends to bridge the gulf of reticence which the different forms of Eastern and Western pride create to separate men of different races, and causes them to misjudge each other from across the gulf.

The relationship between the father and his sons is one of the pleasantest features of Egyptian life. "To please your father is to please God, and to displease your father is to displease God," said Mohammed; and the teaching is taken to heart. I never was in any family where the sons, of whatever age, did not rise when their father entered a room, waiting for him to be seated; an air of respect coming over them which prevents any slackness of good manners in his presence. His slightest wish is a law obeyed with quiet grace.

The youngest son of this particular family sits by his father's side at meals, and waits upon him as a most attentive servant. A father is seldom or never harsh to his sons; he reasons with them in a way that assumes intelligence, and a perfect desire to consider his wishes on their part. An undutiful son is very rare amongst Moslems.

The deplorable decline of respect paid to the aged in Western lands has no echo in the East. "Nothing more greatly surprises the European traveller," Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole admits, "than the polite and gentleman-like manners of Egyptians of all classes. They always do the right thing in the most courteous, graceful, and

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self-possessed manner, and intentional rudeness to an older man, or a superior in rank, is almost unknown."

There never was a community in this world, I imagine, without its scamp and its "ne'er-do-well." This village was no exception. Sitting in the mosque, alone with his gloomy thoughts, was an old man—I saw him daily—who had been, only a few days before our arrival, the unwitting cause of one of those crimes of passion so common in the East. He had cuffed a small boy for some fault; the boy's relatives—unfortunately most of them the family of a rascal who all his days had been a troubler of the village peace—resented this. A brawl ensued, and in the deadly rage excited, the scamp had fired a shot which landed him in prison on a charge of murder.

His family, a generation ago, had been rich and respected, but the ne'er-do-well proclivity, with a quarrelsome love of litigation, had reduced them to a strip of land worth only a pittance.

Another scamp, an ignorant but amiable poltroon of a rogue, cunning enough this one to "rise in the world," and not fall, was a small landowner who carried with him the conscious dignity of the title of Bey. Quite illiterate, and with no scruples in the pursuit of gain, he went his ignominious way for many years, reaping the satisfaction with life, which marked him, from a secretly increasing pile of piastres, and caring nothing for the contumely of men.

There came a day when the palace in Cairo, intent on facilitating commerce in titles, practically set up a shop and bagmen, with everything marked in plain figures at *prix fixe*. The Oriental is never a miser unless he is contemplating an extravagant *coup*. This

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gentleman had seen the goods of the royal establishment, and envied the "wear" on other men. During a visit to the capital he found that his particular fancy in adornments was marked—during the time of sale only—as low as £300! He went in and proudly banged the price upon the counter, and the shopman, all smiles, informed him that the order could be executed in the course of a week. As a matter of protective form —Lord Cromer was an alert tyrant, and was known to have an unreasoning dislike of this nice shop and especially of the gentlemen who were allowed to appropriate the profits—some inquiry was made as to the customer's suitability for knighthood. A curt reply from Upper Egypt said—if this man wished even to be called effendi (gentleman) he would disgrace the title. With what result? Did the report stop the sale? Not a bit of it; it only enhanced the price of the purchase. A mention of £450, a peremptory letter to the gentleman of the "effendi" joke, and an official "character" was supplied to Cairo in every way satisfactory to the shopkeeper. Most of the private pile of piastres disappeared, for a bauble which ever since has been a daily satisfaction to a saucy rogue, who cares nothing that he never learnt to write even his own name.

At last the time for our departure arrived. Omar assured me that no one would break a gullah (water-jar) after us, and that our house, we might rest assured, would not be swept for three days. This was a great compliment, for if a person visits you in Egypt, whose return you do not desire, you speak of "breaking a gullah after him," and when you are very much in earnest you actually break a jar. To sweep away the dust of his feet, in less than three days, would be to

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remove the chance of seeing your guest again; and for the same reason you must not sweep a visitor's rooms at night.

It was a misty morning on which, having made our adieus with heartfelt thanks for many and great kindnesses, our little cavalcade returned across that plain over which English enterprise and skill had wrought such beneficent change. In a mile or two the mist became increased until the particles of moisture in the air clung to hair and clothes, and made us white, reminding the Englishmen of a mild, "muggy" morning at home in early winter.

When I hear of the weather having radically changed in the British Isles, of "old-fashioned Christmasses" and the like, I recall the entries in old diaries, like those of Pepys and Evelyn, which soon disprove such fallacies. Of Egypt it is often asserted that the climate has changed; the fateful British occupation is responsible even for this, with its irrigation and its tree-planting. But the same rule applies here—I have at hand a diary of the days of Mohammed Ali (he died in 1849), and mornings like this are spoken of: even a mist at the Citadel, just as I experienced it, in the early morning when I went to photograph the Holy Carpet before the crowds assembled to see it start for Mecca. It was a curious sensation, nevertheless, in a land to which the preservation of the antiquities of the tombs bears witness to a marvellous dryness, to travel, as we did that morning, through fifty miles of mist which completely veiled the landscape.

I must relate an episode of our departure from the country railway station. Naturally I gave a present to the servants, who had worked hard and faithfully, and

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with delightful good humour, for us in so many ways. It was with hesitation that two or three of them accepted the money: when I reached my special negro attendant he drew back with every sign of distress, saying, "Lą! la! la!" ("No! no! no!") With persistency I forced a silver coin upon him; and as he reluctantly took it, there were tears—of shame, I found—in his eyes. I asked his young master to explain that it is the English custom to offer a gift to those who have served us. He accepted the explanation, but the smiles did not return to his face, even when we shook hands with him from the carriage window. "It was shameful of him," he told Omar again, "to take money from his master's friend."

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CHAPTER VI

"The almost miraculous renaissance in Islam which is now proceeding in Turkey and in other Mohammedan countries reminds one forcibly of Dante's lines:

'For I have seen
The thorn frown rudely all the winter long,
And after bear the rose upon its top.'"

Claud Field, *Mystics and Saints of Islam*, p. 202.

How few people know anything of the wonders and the treasures that are hidden off the narrow streets of native Cairo—those silent ways leading to no bazaar, or even to a single shop to attract the curious from the paths so well trodden by the dragoman and his trusting victims. And yet if only some kindly ginn would give you the right key, it is out of these streets, the old residential quarters of Prince and Pasha, and of the religious dignitary wealthier than them all, that the real Oriental splendour of Cairo may be found.

It was the genii of friendship that put the key into my hand which enabled me to break out of the dusty by-ways, so narrow that only an uneven slit of sky could be seen between the eaves above, into gorgeous old palaces, with wide courtyards and spacious gardens, richly decorated halls and chambers, the magnitude and beauty of which transport one into the days that were truly golden for the few men who had the power to possess themselves of the opulence of the East.

The street itself—it is seldom more than ten feet wide—is certainly forbidding, as it was meant to be,

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

"THE ONLY TRACE OF GRACIOUSNESS THE PALACE EVER SHOWED TO THE OUTER WORLD OF THE STREET WAS THE BEAUTIFUL MASHRABIEH WORK OF THE BAY WINDOWS AT THE TOP OF THE HOUSE."

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for the one object in the days when these houses were built was privacy; and the only trace of graciousness the palace ever showed to the outer world of the street was the beautiful mashrabieh work of the bay windows at the top of the house—an invention, as everyone knows, by which the curiosity of the ladies of the hareem might be indulged in seeing what was going on below, while still making their own concealment effectual.

On the ground floor the houses offer nothing to the street but a massive stone wall, with a square hole at intervals, high up and strongly barred. The gateway is sometimes impressive, with groined arches, though it only serves to accentuate the prison-like air. But let the doors be opened—the bowabs and the black eunuchs who sit on the bench are sure to suspect your credentials, unless their master has sent his special servant to await you—and you are at once in a sunny and spacious world.

One of the most beautiful of the ancient palaces I visited is that of the historic house of Sadat, where I was most courteously received by the Sheikh Abdul Hamid El-Bekri. The sheikh is the chief descendant in Egypt of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's devoted friend, and the first caliph of Islam.

The courtyard is more than usually beautiful, with a noble old tree and some exquisite mashrabieh work. We were received in the salemlik, a hall of fine proportions and the most exquisite ancient decorations, much of the wall space being covered with precious old Persian tiles. The beauty of these tiles, which are so much admired in any place, can only be rightly appreciated when they are seen in the subdued light of a hall such as this, for which they were made, with decorations

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and proportions designed by the artist who chose them. I have heard of a man in England buying and demolishing an old house to possess himself of all its ancient oakwork; I fancy these tiles, so rich in the beauty of a lost art, would far eclipse the value of any Cairene palace that contained them.

How many strange and wonderful scenes of Oriental splendour, as well as of horror, have taken place in this palace. Many meetings of great historical importance have been held here. Napoleon made great efforts to ingratiate himself with the head of the Sadat family, who was at first decorated with the Legion of Honour, and then, when he did not fall into line with the Emperor's designs on Egypt, was bastinadoed. This palace was the scene of the most special of those "ziks," in which mystical religious zeal developed into a sort of frenzy, such as the Western mind cannot contemplate without terror. It was here that the dervishes, famous for eating live serpents, gave their chief exhibitions, until an enlightened head of the house, many years since, declared the thing disgusting and contrary to the religion, which distinctly says that snakes are unclean things and forbidden as food. In these present days, as Professor Margoliouth says, the reformed Islam of Egypt discourages the practices whereby the Sufis endeavour to hypnotise themselves, viz. dancing, singing, and repetition of syllables supposed to represent the divine name.

As the sheikh's family was away he took us through every part of the palace, even to the beautiful hareem apartments, the chief of which has some very fine carving. The modern note obtruding itself on the medieval air of the place was a baby's cot of Parisian

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make. It was evident that the most cheerful part of the house was—as is often the case in these palaces—given over to the ladies' use. Some of the most beautiful of the decorations are found in these lofty rooms and balconies; and there is an abundance of air and light.

The large garden too, which in the former days must have been a most delightful resort, was nearly all hareem (the word only means reserved or private; the tramcars have hareem compartments), again following the same custom. The sakieh (water-wheel), however, is now broken and silent, its song being ended, and the garden falls, like the palace, into disuse.

It is not permissible, of course, to discuss the opinions of a gentleman's wife, but I gathered that Egyptian ladies of the highest rank are finding the advantages of the new houses which are turning Cairo into an imitation Paris, with all their "modern conveniences" of electricity, and situated where friends may easily pay their visits. A garage too is a necessity now, for hareem bounds have extended, and narrow streets may no longer cut off the educated Moslem lady of to-day from her drives to Gizereh, her shopping excursions,—the visits to the jeweller being a cherished institution with all Eastern ladies, and no city in the world can show finer jewels than are to be seen in the shops in Cairo,—from the opera, and other occupations and amusements.

When the Sheikh El-Bekri had shown me all the ramifications of the beautiful old palace of his family, he kindly invited me to pay him a visit, later on, at his modern home.

The contrast was complete. Out of medievalism one stepped into the twentieth-century Paris, or rather,

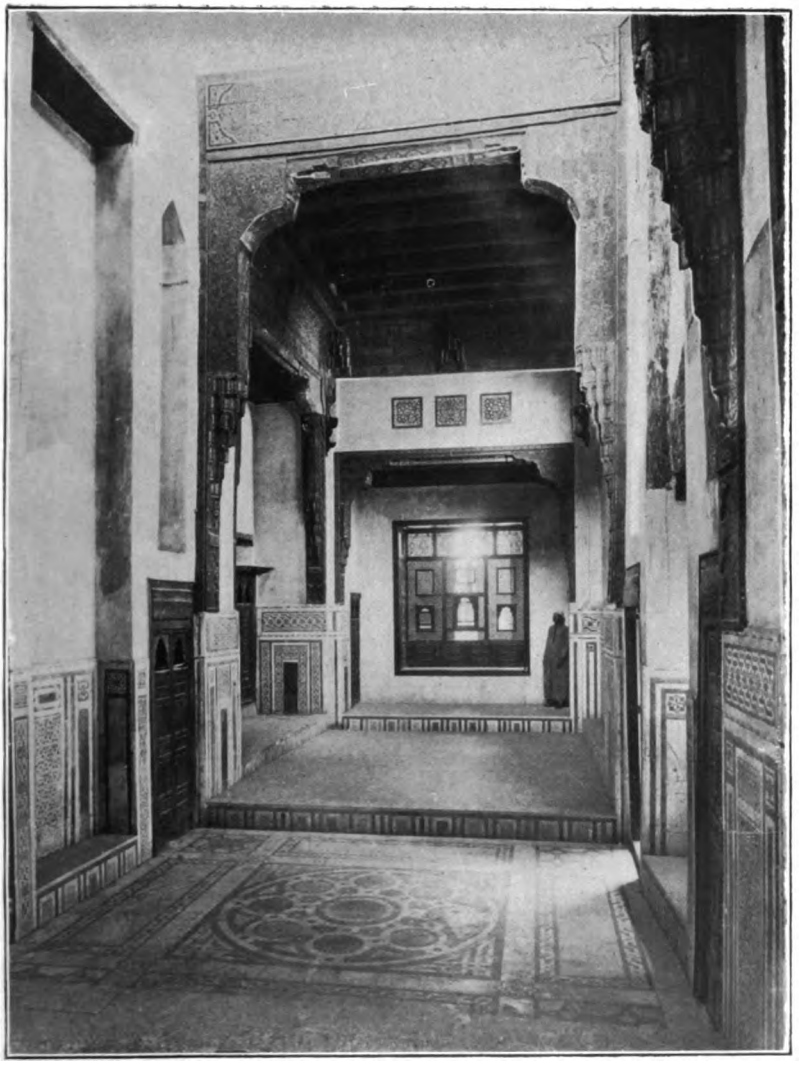
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from the silent fastnesses of a feudal castle, which was a world in itself, into the modern home, accessible to the haunts of men, the telephone linking it to every modern interest of a bustling city.

The salemlik becomes a drawing-room, still for men only, it is true, and with an entrance separate from the hareem; but from its windows I saw the hareem part of the family starting for their afternoon drive—facts to keep in mind when one comes to consider the question of the position of the Moslem women and the possibility of their social and moral advance.

Islam has travelled far since the Sheikh Sayyed Sadat of that day—to whom my host has now succeeded—rode his horse, at the celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, over the prostrate forms of men who believed his noble ancestry gave him a miraculous power which could save them from injury. There are many middle-aged people still living who witnessed this ceremony of the Doseh, as it was called. And to-day we discuss it in this modern drawing-room as a thing belonging to a past age; and the sheikh talks with me of Moslem schemes for bringing Islam abreast of all that is worthy in the Western world. An enlarged photograph of the late Sheikh Mohammed Abdul, looking down upon us the while—that enlightened man (he was Grand Mufti) whose influence on Islam in Egypt eclipses that of any man during the past century; and whose teaching, in a sentence, was—Back to the Koran and the simple godliness of the Prophet; away with the superstitious inventions and the fables of later men; let Islam be true to the spirit of its great founder, and his friends, who extolled learning wherever found. Ali, the Prophet's grandson, the sheikh reminded me, said, "Eminence in

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

THE HAREEM OF AN OLD PALACE IN CAIRO.

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science is the highest of honours: he dies not who gives life to learning."

It was a traditional saying of Mohammed himself that "whoso pursueth the road of knowledge, God will direct him to the road of Paradise; and verily the angels spread their arms to receive him who seeketh after knowledge; verily the superiority of a learned man over a mere worshipper is like that of the full moon over the stars."

The sheikh was subdued and sad at the thought of the slowness of the advance; men in the East, he thought, had not yet learned to work disinterestedly and steadily for the cause of humanity, and to co-operate in their efforts for the common good. The cultivation of what is called "public spirit" is what is most needed in Egypt. Where is the leader who can call it into being?

The sheikh's eldest son, a lad of fifteen, was able to talk to me in good English; he is receiving a modern education, instead of studying at Al Azar, as his ancestors have done for hundreds of years! Surely a most significant fact with regard to the future of Islam in Egypt.

It was soon after these visits that the Sheikh El-Bekri succeeded to the higher honours of the chief descendant in Egypt of the Prophet Mohammed, in succession to his father-in-law, Sayyad Sadat, who leaves no male children.

Another splendid old palace is that to which I went one night to offer condolences to Sayyed Sadat on the death of a relative. The whole place was brilliantly illuminated, as is usual for all ceremonies held at night in the East; even the narrow winding road leading to the house was bright with innumerable lamps specially set up for the occasion.

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The mellow colours of the great courtyard, and the brightness of the interior decorations, and the carpets under the light of myriad candles sparkling in the midst of the lustre hangings, made a wonderful setting for all the chief dignitaries of Islam who were gathered there, as a sign of sympathy.

As the only European present, I felt the contrast between these robed and turbaned figures, and the black and white ugliness of the Englishman's evening livery.

Here was the aged Sheikh Al-Azar, the Sheikh El-Islam, and the Grand Mufti, with all the lesser lights of the Church. We sat round the room on the divans, while the Koran was chanted by men well known for the sweetness of their voices and the purity of their diction. Scarcely a word passed, for it is wrong to speak when holy writ is being recited; and one must not smoke, or sit in a lounging attitude, or with crossed legs. Coffee is, nowadays, permitted, and on these occasions is constantly handed round.

I think these visits at times of bereavement, when one's presence—without any of those halting and painful words of condolence it is so hard to express on the formal visit paid in England—is taken in itself as a sign of sympathy, and the comforting words of one's scripture are read by men trained to express their true meaning, are an excellent custom.

In addition to the palaces there are many fine old houses in Cairo, to be reached by the same narrow ways, where the quiet home-life of the well-to-do Moslems of the middle-class goes on in ways unknown to Europeans. These houses are spacious and airy, though from the street they look so forbidding.

Built round the usual square courtyard, where grow

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some high date-palm trees perhaps, with a central fountain, they are delightful retreats from the noise and dust without. These houses have little interior decoration and few treasures of tile and mashrabieh.

I visited many such homes; one of them dwells in my mind as a delightful picture of patriarchal happiness—a fine old man, surrounded by his children and grandchildren, with his servants and their children and grandchildren, ruling them all with firmness and the most kindly grace.

The first thing in the house his younger son showed to me with pride was the place of prayer, where all the men, master and dependants, meet at the stated hours to adore and supplicate their God.

Such homes rarely, if ever, have any pictures; here the only adornment of the walls was a large framed inscription in gold, on a blue ground, of the words, in Arabic, of course—"In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful," hung on the wall of the salemlik, so that it is the first thing one sees on entering the house.

The traditional saying of the Prophet, "The angels do not enter a house in which is a dog, nor that in which there are pictures," still keeps the Moslem home, to Western ideas, a rather forlorn place, which the splendour of the carpets and the growing addition of modern furniture does little to redeem.

The use of photography is increasing; one of the sons of this house possesses a camera, and enlarged portraits of departed relatives are now found on many walls. And the educated Moslem thinks that a mistake has been made in attributing to the Prophet any sayings which can be construed into limiting advance in art,

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as in science. When he forbade the making of pictures —"If you must make pictures, make them of trees and things without souls"—it was his sole intention to forbid the use of pictures in the mosque.

It was Mohammed's intense hatred of idolatry that led him to denounce drawing in the same breath as sculpture; art, as such, detached from every form of the worship of God, it is maintained, was never contemplated when Mohammed declared that "whosoever draweth a picture shall be punished at the last day by ordering him to breathe a spirit into it; and this he can never do, and so he will be punished as long as God wills." This is a traditional saying. The teaching of the Koran itself is shown in these words: "O believers, surely wine and games of chance, and statues and the divining arrows, are an abomination of Satan's work" (Sura v. 92). In Cairo there is now a School of Art in which Moslem students are showing great proficiency in both statuary and portrait painting.

It is to this restriction, of course, that the wonderful ingenuity and beauty attained by Arabesque decoration is due. If anyone wishes to see what such decoration is capable of, he should visit the new Mosque of El-Rifaï, in Cairo. I imagine that there is not a single note of importance in the whole range of such decoration which is not here turned to gorgeous effect, through the knowledge and skill of Hertz Pasha. This splendid mosque, just beneath the Citadel, was not opened till this summer (1912), but I had special permission to visit it last winter.

With regard to animals, it must not be supposed that because the dog is forbidden the house, and is regarded as an unclean beast—it is the mouth of the

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

INSIDE THE COURTYARD OF AN OLD PALACE IN CAIRO.

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dog that is dreaded, experience in hot countries shows with what cause—that therefore the Moslem has no thought for animals. Having myself seen a dog become suddenly raving mad in a desert village, I can understand the Prophet's precautions. A rich Moslem recently left £40 a year for bread for dogs. It is the general belief that animals will with man appear at the resurrection, and some of the most worthy will be admitted to Paradise. "Fear God with regard to animals," said Mohammed, "ride them when they are fit to be ridden, and get off when they are tired. Verily there are rewards for doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink." A traditional story of the Prophet says, "An adultress was forgiven, who, passing by a dog by a well and seeing it holding out its tongue from thirst which was near killing it, took off her boot, and made a rope of one of her garments, and drew water for the dog." And all the Prophet's teaching agreed with this; many are the touching and beautiful stories told of his own love of birds and beasts.

Like all writers on Islam who do not know the living people, having gone solely to books, Mr. Bosworth Smith, although his generous panegyric is valued as almost the only book ever written by a scholarly Englishman in which a favourable word is said for this religion, gives too much praise to the Moslem's treatment of animals. It is another of the contradictions of the East, that in this matter they are both better and worse than the Western people. The injustice is to write down all Oriental folk as cruel.

Playing in the courtyard we saw the children of the household and the little black son of Bilal the gatekeeper —descended from a long line of slaves to the family,

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though now being as free as his master. Indeed it is the Moslem custom in houses of this sort to bring children up in pairs, the servant's child with the master's, giving each almost identical advantages; and later, if the poor dependent proves clever, sending him to the same school or university, and in the case of girls allowing them to learn from the same governesses. Many a child of slaves has in this manner won his way to the very highest position; for here birth is no obstacle, which in Christendom is the almost impassable bar, guarded as it is in the last resort by snobbery, that cruellest and least relenting of foes to humble advance.

For our entertainment, sometimes, a negro lad of the house would swarm up one of the high trees and secure for us some dates; his master joking him on the fact that such a small proportion of those gathered ever reached himself or *his* family! Such again are the principles of equality, when put into actual practice.

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CHAPTER VII

"A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he has done in this world to his fellow-man. When he dies, people will ask, What property has he left behind him? But the angels will ask, What good deeds has he sent before him?"

Mishat-ul-Masabih, trans. by Capt. Matthews, I. vi. 445.

ANOTHER country-house visit took us into an entirely different realm, and opened another phase of Islamic life in Egypt. I had the pleasure during my stay in Cairo of trying to be of some use to the many students there; with the result that I am able to again abundantly deny the charge, so often made against Oriental people, that they are wanting in gratitude.

The tangible kindnesses I received on all sides were enough to obscure any service I found it possible to give, and enlarged my experience of innumerable instances of single-minded gratitude, pathetic in the self-sacrifice they entailed—an experience which began years before with the most primitive Moslem folk in the Sahara desert; where I first became acquainted with Arab people.

The Prophet's own gratitude for service and devotion was unfailing; in the Koran he says, "God is not pleased with thanklessness in His servants" (Sura xxxix. 9). Long ago Lane explained how unjust this charge of ingratitude was, arising from a failure to understand the Eastern, and especially the bedouin, code of manners, by which they take certain services from other human beings as a thing it would be an

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insult to even hint that they would refuse. To thank a friend would often be to suggest that he was despicable. It is founded on ideas almost as old, I imagine, as the first records of the Arab race; and as one would expect, the Koran supports the idea—reward is for those who give, "seeking neither recompense nor thanks" (Sura lxxvi. 9).

The Prophet was, as I have said, unfailing in gratitude and devotion to those who served him; there are instances of this on every page of his life. And the universal tribute paid to this virtue in the Arab people by those who, like Palgrave, for instance, have lived long amongst them, shows how unjust the casual judgment can be when, owing to mere surface habits, a whole people can be so wrongly described. The instances of deepest gratitude, I have myself found, amongst Arabs in oases of the Sahara, remote as that of Tolga, are confirmed by a friend of mine, a lady who lived for nearly two years with a poor Arab family, the only English resident in Kairouan, the most religious town in Tunisia, finding, as she said, "a wealth of devotion and gratitude" for the services she gave to her friends and their neighbours.

To my mind there is nothing more beautiful in all the development of that fine conception of the duties of friendship which is found in the worthy Moslem, as the perfect confidence he shows in the willingness of friends to share everything with him.

The story is told of Ibrahim ben Adham, one of the saints of Islam—a story which inspired a beautiful poem of Leigh Hunt's.

"One night I saw in a dream Gabriel, with a piece of paper in his hand.

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"'What are you doing?' I asked him.

"'I am writing on this sheet of paper the names of the friends of the Lord!'

"'Will you write mine among them?'

"'But you are not one of His friends!'

"'If I am not one of His friends, at least I am a friend of His friends!'

"Immediately a voice was heard—'O Gabriel, write Ibrahim's name on the *first* line; for he who loves our friends is our friend.'"

I think it was Mrs. Gaskell who suggested that Christianity was in need of a second Golden Rule, which should be "Let your friends do unto you as you would do unto them." We might go to the East to realise with what happiness such a rule can be put into practice.

Our system of invitation and acceptance, for instance, in the matter of hospitality is exactly reversed. Here, between friends the guest decides that he wishes to pay a visit, and says so; in most cases you honour a man, not by inviting him to dinner, but by telling him you will dine with him.

One of my student friends, knowing I was particularly interested in the organised charities of Islam, was anxious that I should visit his relatives in Tanta and see the wakfs (charities) of Pasha Menshawi, the magnitude of whose legacies, I knew, exceeded anything of modern times. A missionary charge against Islam, often repeated, is that while there is a good deal of promiscuous alms-giving, anything like organised charity is unknown.

Tanta is a town in Lower Egypt which has had a bad reputation with Europeans from the lack of zeal it has shown in turning itself into an imitation of a European

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city; from the magnitude of its annual moolid of its patron saint, which largely takes the form of a vast fair, attracting all the riff-raff of the country, as great fairs have a way of doing the world over; and from several outbursts of fanaticism on the part of the mob, which have received full attention in the incorruptible English Press in Egypt, too far away to take any note of such things as religious riots in Liverpool!

I believe that last year a British regiment marching through Tanta from Alexandria to Cairo was roughly handled, bottle-throwing—it sounds like Ireland—leading to an order of fixed bayonets.

The town has been behind in more important things than the development of the flash French architecture, say of Cairo, which builds sky-scrapers before it has made a drainage system. Let the truth be told, Tanta *is* a dirty place, and modern education has lagged. But there is a new spirit abroad. A sort of municipal pride is coming to life in its chief men; it has an alert governor, and the Sheikh of Tanta, whose power is second to none in Islamic Egypt, is a man of learning and enlightenment, and what is more, of genuine spiritual force.

Tanta, then, was the scene of an experience which transported us, with the facility of the magic carpet, into another true Arabian night—the story of which may be put into the same form of simple narrative as the old stories take.

We were met by our host, the father of my young friend, an able-looking, turbaned Arab, and a relative (an *avocat*) who spoke French, and a doctor friend speaking English. Our host, Basouny Bey El Khatib, is the executor of the late Pasha's wakfs—a considerable trust, entailing, I found, the management of no less

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than 6000 feddans (roughly, a feddan is an acre) of the most productive land in Egypt, and the great revenues coming from them. It is said that land in this part of Egypt is worth £200 an acre. The extent of the Pasha's fortune may be gauged by remembering that a Moslem may not dispose of more than a third of his wealth away from his rightful heirs.

Equipages with prancing steeds—the first luxury of an Eastern man of wealth, who likes no faltering in the matter of the prancing—were awaiting us, and we were driven to a beautiful house in the town, where the *avocat* was to entertain us to lunch. This house combined a great deal of Western comfort, with provision for Oriental customs. The coffee served at once in the salemlik was the delicious sort only grown in Yemen, which, with the addition of a speck of ambergris to each cup, makes a drink fit for the gods. The lunch was truly superb, Egyptian in every detail, but served in the French style, with the multiplicity of dishes and silver and cutlery which rich houses in Egypt are beginning to possess for the entertainment of European visitors. The provision of food of all sorts was abundant beyond English imagination, including every delicacy of the East.

As I was not intimate enough with my host to refuse, without fear of offence, any of the fourteen courses, I was led to remark to the doctor, who has been in England, that our meals must mean a sort of semi-starvation to Egyptians. His instant agreement was amusing. When in London, he said, he had been invited to lunch with a judge; but after he had left the house, he was so little *complet* that he adjourned to a neighbouring hotel and began again! But then, he explained, he seldom ate more than one meal a day!

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After lunch we adjourned to the great hall for the usual coffee and smoke, till our chariots came to the door, and we dashed off to see the new mosque schools, almshouses, and hospital, built in accordance with the Menshawi bequest.

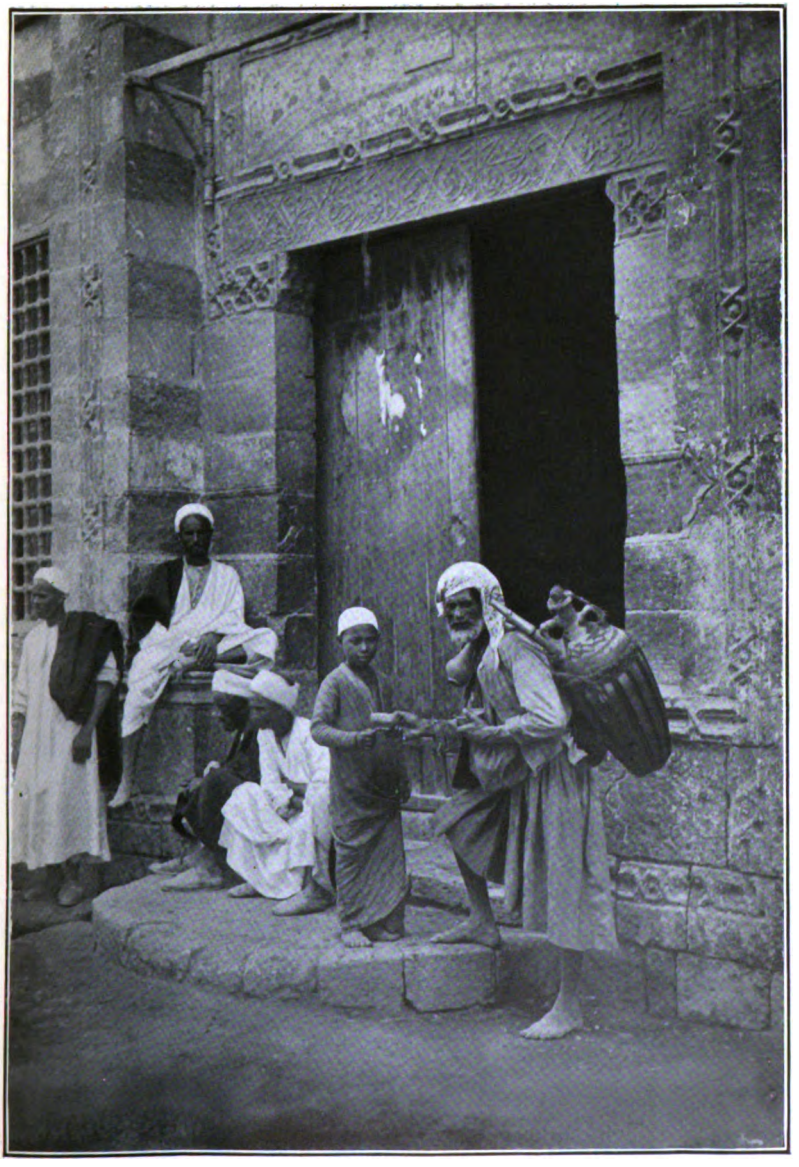
The mosque is a fine building, beautifully decorated, in Arabesque style, of course, by Egyptian work-people. A side chapel contains the tomb of the founder, at which prayers are said, and the Koran read, daily. There were a good many worshippers in the mosque, about to make the three o'clock prayer, some of them being students from the large theological school which is under the same roof, and only divided from the mosque by a screen. The school was a delightful scene of picturesque activity, the scholars drawn apparently from the gentler classes, being attired, as becomes the student of religion, in robe and turban, and all of them looking remarkably well-fed and clothed under the Pasha's provision for them.

I ventured to suggest a motto to the Bey for the mosque—I had noted the lines from an old book of travel; Sir William Jones, a hundred years since, had seen them on a mosque on the tiny island of Johanna, off the coast of Africa.

> "The world was given us for our own edification,
> Not for the purpose of raising sumptuous buildings;
> Life, for the discharge of moral and religious duties,
> Not for pleasurable indulgences;
> Wealth to be liberally bestowed,
> Not avariciously hoarded,
> And learning, to produce good actions,
> Not empty disputes."

Quite near is the hospital, with its bright wards, its terraces, and balconies, and a charming garden, where

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

"A Drink of Water in the Name of Allah!"

A familiar scene at the mosque door.

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a profusion of roses, lavender, stocks, violets, jessamine, were all flowering amidst its palms, in such glorious sunshine as forbade a single sense of ours to remind us that the word "winter" still held the calendar.

The great surprise, however, was in the hospital itself. To have found such an institution in a provincial town in England would have been a gratification; in Tanta, a town backward in "morally bankrupt Islam," it seemed that only a touch of magic could account for the scene. Like the other charitable buildings, standing on the same area, the hospital was built after the Pasha's demise, under the intelligent care of the trustee, and our doctor friend, who, by the Pasha's wish, is the director. By any standard, this hospital is worthy to rank as a modern institution, possessing every approved device, even to the latest of those exquisite electrical and photographic inventions for the treatment of disease which require a separate operating chamber, with specially generated motive-power.

As we went through the hospital wards, and greeted the poor Moslem patients who occupied the beds, and who must have come from the dark and comfortless hovels which the Egyptian poor inhabit, we wondered what sort of miracle they thought it was that the Pasha's wealth, applied in a way unique in this country, had created for their benefit.

Adjoining the hospital are the almshouses, for poor old men and women—these being under the sheikh of the mosque, who was also nominated by the Pasha. Like the hospital—and of course the schools—this institution is for the benefit solely of those of the Moslem faith. But the Pasha's enlightenment did not stop short of tolerance of other religions. I will give later a

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list of the charitable causes named in the will of this remarkable man, which show the broadest sympathies; indeed, he almost apologises, after helping every sort of Christian and Jewish charity, for wishing this particular group of buildings to be set apart for Moslem benefit. Miss Claridge, an English lady, who has had experience in British army nursing, is the matron. It is a great work, I think, to be able to set a new example of the noblest use of organised charity, in a country awaking to its social obligations.

In the matron's room, over a cup of tea, we learnt something of the Pasha's history. Though his family is an ancient one, going back indeed to Arabia, and then to descent from the Prophet himself, he was not born to any great wealth. His energy and insight were remarkable, however, and he was one of those men who acquired land when the price was very low, and saw it advance in value literally beyond the dreams of avarice.

Leaving the hospital, we now drove through the narrow streets to the famous mosque of Tanta, which rose over the tomb of the thirteenth-century sheikh, Adbul Abbas Sidi Ahmed Al-Badawi—to give him his full name, and his title (Lord), and his popular nickname.

As the history of the mosque, as Moslems tell it, does not quite accord with the European guide-books, I give it in the sheikh's words, omitting the legendary miracles and marvels, for the reason that Moslem friends who hold this saint in great respect regret the accumulation of the fables which have gathered round his name, with a truly Eastern profusion; and in saying this I do not forget the Italian ingenuity and imaginativeness in this respect. I am writing in Siena, at the time

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when the celebration of that noble woman, Saint Catherine, is taking place, with its recollection of the stigmata, which a Pope had to declare was "luminous" and not "bloody," in order to appease the jealous adherents of St. Francis, who wished to retain for their saint the sole credit of miraculous marks.

The Saint of Tanta was born in Fez, Morocco, where his ancestors had migrated to escape a persecution of the nobles of Arabia by Al-Haggag. When he was seven years old, his father had a dream, in which it was insisted that he should go to Mecca and take the boy with him. Al Sherif Hassas, his brother, records how the family wandered from one place to another, starting in the year 603 of the Flight, until, after four years, they arrived in the Holy City. They were cordially received by the other descendants of the Prophet, and remained there until their father died in 627.

"I remained with my brothers, Abbas being the youngest; and for his bravery we gave him the nickname of Al-Badawi—the bedouin. I taught him the Koran, and made him go to school with my son, Hoseyn. He was afterwards recognised as the noblest of all the Knights of Mecca."

Abbas adopted a life of piety, and became a mystic and a recluse, keeping aloof from mankind to such a degree that eventually he only spoke by signs. Then he, too, had a strange vision—that he must go to Tanta.

It is probable that he had passed through this place as a child, on that four years' journey—in any case the whole Islamic world becomes as one well-known country to the pilgrims who gather in Mecca—and so without hesitation he left the Holy City, taking no count of the general opposition of relatives and friends to his doing so.

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In Tanta the mystic's eccentricities increased; he lived entirely on the housetop for twelve years, eating little food—his mind entranced with the contemplation of, and longing for, God.

The sheikh used to cover his face so that no man could see him, and it is related that a certain Sidi Adbul Majid so longed to see him that he importuned him for the favour. Upon seeing the sheikh's face, Majid died instantly.

As Rodwell observes, of the traditions of Islam, "however absurd they may be in many of their details, it will generally be found that where there is an ancient and tolerably universal consent, there will be found at the bottom a residuum of fact and historical truth." And Burton's experience of the East led him to the same conclusion.

To such men as this saint, of whatever creed, miracles have always been attributed. As another great Moslem mystic, Rumi said, "Love and faith are a mighty spell." There is a wonderful similarity about the miracles of say St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Anthony of Padua, and those of such men as the Saint of Tanta, patron of all the bedouins.

The chief of the mosque to-day was quite ready to discuss the question of his predecessor's life, as it affects human credulity. In the main his views were very similar to those of the Sheikh of the Mosque of Hoseyn, which I give later on.

"The visiting of the tomb of such a man draws men to the House of God; it turns their thoughts away from earthly things," he said.

As a friend thereupon remarked, credulity should be considered in relation to the general standard of learning

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and culture; the advance of education must undoubtedly tend to give a just proportion to things which put too great a strain upon reason.

To which the sheikh replied that care should be taken not to exalt reason above faith. "The practical outcome of men's veneration for the Sheikh Al-Badawi has been gifts for education and the poor which are worth over £50,000 a year."

We arrived at the mosque during school-time; the great area was crowded with circles of pupils sitting at the feet of their teachers, who squatted on the low teaching chairs. What a babel, what inconsequence of teaching method; what lack—apparently—of any controlling link between teacher and taught.

It is a wonderful sight, more impressive and picturesque than Al Azar, even taking into account the greater splendour of the open court of the Cairo University. The floor-space here seemed to me almost as spacious as that of Al Azar, and it was even more thronged with pupils. The whole scene gained a certain indefinable interest from the fact that it is remote from the ordinary tourist beat; the lads seemed fresher, showing a welcome in their glance at the stranger, that one could scarcely expect to find in Cairo.

It would turn the edge of any boy's temper to be on exhibition for more than half a year as a curious biological specimen. I don't wonder that the Oriental spirit passed the point of endurance some little time since, and made an aggressive camera the excuse for a riot at Al Azar—serious enough to have kept all cameras out of the place ever since by definite order of the Government. I have seen monocles or lorgnettes—as

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the case may be—there, which were, to my mind, more provoking than any camera could be; and parasols which seemed about to prod the specimens, the mental attitude of the visitors obviously being about equal to that with which they would regard the exhibits at an aquarium. I have the good fortune to publish for the first time what I am assured is the last photograph taken at Al Azar before the prohibition was made. The dislike of any suggestion of a disturbance is so great that the Sheikh Al Azar himself will not face the responsibility of giving permission to photograph there now.

I am glad I saw this scene in the Tanta mosque, with its pulsating, crowded life, so purely Eastern in every phase of it. In less than a year the fascinating picture will have been shattered; and these courts will be silent and deserted, but for scattered worshippers, and at the one crowded hour of the Friday noonday prayer.

The Tanta mosque pupils—there are two thousand four hundred of them—will before long migrate to a modern school which is being built (at a cost of £12,000, by the general Wakfs administration), a little distance away, with separate classrooms, where the lads will sit on forms at yellow desks imported from the school furnishing warehouse on Holborn Viaduct, and the sheikhs who teach them will be ordered to stand at their work, for all the world like the teachers of a "godless Board School" in England.

Learning will flourish more; and the price of that increasing drabness which follows advance in all parts of the world must be paid. But no one who has watched these vivid pictures of Oriental life can see them dis-

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

A Scene in the Great University of Al Azar in Cairo.

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appear without regret. I only hope the graceful robe and the turban may be left, and that there will be nothing done to add to that section of the effendi class which, while donning European clothes, deserts religious practice and belief.

At Alexandria, too, new modern schools are being built, and also at Damietta. One worthy ambition of the reformers is to provide great space in these schools "for a bountiful supply of light and air."

We were now conducted to the sheikh's private room, where coffee appeared, and we talked again of the mosque and its saint, of education, and of the signs of reviving in Islam. The sheikh gave me an outline of the organisation of such a mosque as that of Tanta, with the expenses, which I give in a chapter devoted to the mosques.

The sheikh was too great an authority in his church to escape my question as to the cursing of Christians in the mosques on Friday, which Mr. Gairdner in *The Reproach of Islam* has charged the Moslems with. His denial was as emphatic, and his explanation exactly the same, as that of other dignitaries.

"Did the words used," I persisted, "cover the case of a Moslem who had turned Christian?"

"Certainly not; such a man was disliked by the people; perverts were not loved," he thought, "in any country."

"In barbaric times," remarked another Moslem present, "followers of the Prophet had thought to do God service by killing the pervert. Christians had thought the same; but a world that saw an Inquisition, and the lighting of Smithfield fires, as religious institutions, had passed away. Is Islam to be stamped for

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ever with its earlier methods? Does modern Christianity like to be reminded of days when a woman was stoned to death for gathering sticks on the Sabbath? Because we once put sorcerers to death, may we never be freed from that charge, even when the thing is obsolete? To read the missionary books one would think not; and also one might imagine that the writers, who know so much of Islam, had lost the power of memory as to the history of their own country, where the witch was ignominiously drowned in the village pond not so very many years ago.

"Some of us Moslems claim the liberty of a rational adaptation of our religion to the advancing civilisation of the world; and we believe we have as much moral right to reconcile the tenets of our faith to the needs of the time in which we live, as Christians have, and that our difficulties in doing this are not greater, in spite of theories of plenary inspiration, the mass of Tradition, and so on; all of which things Protestant England has made short work of in her own case when she wanted to strike a blow—in the very name of religion itself—for liberty of conscience, and other advance. By methods illogical, and inconsistent with ecclesiastical versions of revealed truth or of historical sequence, and with an adaptability to the needs of men rather than of systems, England (or rather I should say Great Britain, for Scotland has played a glorious part in this work) has shown how the best spiritual forces of a religion may, by these methods, be immeasurably fostered and strengthened, raising a whole nation by its moral inspiration to the highest plane of worthy human attainment. I sometimes think," he continued, "that the Christian people who come to us, and your ruling class

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too, and the missionaries especially, wish to discourage and stop all advance on the part of the Moslem people."

After a prolonged visit we said "good-bye." Our horses had attracted a great throng at the mosque entrance; the Arab will forgive anything—and forget his fanaticism (of which, however, we saw no sign) for a good horse, even to the dashing through crowded narrow streets like these; indeed, the nerves of the people in the crowd certainly stood our onslaught better than mine did in one of the chariots.

As a means of progression, I prefer the humble ass, which is in Egypt such an admirable beast, and so suitable to the native conditions in both town and country. The mockery of the Romans in Egypt—"these people ride on asses"—was natural; it is heard to-day, but it never survives long residence in the country by average folk.

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CHAPTER VIII

"This is the happiness of the Arab. Green trees, sweet water, and a kind face make the Garden." *An Arab saying.*

We were now bound for the railway station, for the Pasha's house, where we were to sleep, and the wonderful garden he created, are ten miles or so in the country. When we arrived at the little wayside station it was dark, and our drive through the quiet country—the hooting of the owls was the only sound we heard—revealed nothing of our destination. At last, a pair of gates, a carriage drive, more gates, a gravelled courtyard before a great house, and we alight, to receive an Eastern welcome to what is rightly called a palace, the favourite home of the Pasha Menshawi.

It was here that, with all his activities, the Pasha spared time to create his earthly paradise, where he found his only hobby, and spent the only wealth he spared himself for his personal enjoyment.

Many men, agents, servants, and others, and the lady housekeeper (come from Cairo to represent the Lady Fatma Hanem, the Pasha's widow, who was detained by illness, but sent the most cordial messages of welcome), were in the courtyard to receive us.

At the door of the salemlik, Basouny Bey gave us the Eastern greetings, and as we entered the house there settled upon us that indefinable content of mind which always makes the acceptance of hospitality in

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the East such a restful pleasure. The salemlik is lofty and vast, and, following the usual plan, has four large apartments, one at each corner leading out of it; these, with the hall itself, being placed at the disposal of the guests, who thus have a house of their own, leaving the great wings of the palace, its hareem and the family quarters of the men (with kitchens and servants' rooms) standing apart, though reached by doors leading out of the hall.

The whole house is brilliantly lighted by electricity, with many lustre chandeliers, which Eastern people admire so much that they think Paradise itself is to be illuminated with them. The wall and ceiling decorations are elaborate, a special pride being that they are all the work of Egyptian artists: it is Frenchmen who have usually been employed on this sort of work in Egypt.

Our bedroom was a great apartment with massive furniture, and handsome carpet and hangings, and decorated in the same way as the hall.

It had been ascertained by some means in Cairo that I usually dined at half-past seven, and in accordance with the generous theory that the palace for the time being was mine, a great banquet was prepared for that hour, which is a good deal later than the usual Moslem time of taking the last meal.

Again all the delicacies of the East were put before us, with a choice of European table waters; in the background—so far is Moslem hospitality superior even to the tenets of the religion—there was wine and whisky (the latter word is like a label on all Englishmen in Egypt), although relief manifested itself when it was found that I required neither. Dinner was served in

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one of our four rooms, and the servants set apart for our personal use waited upon us.

In the salemlik, after dinner, the doctor, in conversation, told us that the late Pasha was famous even amongst Moslems for hospitality; his desire that this house of his should never fall short of Arab ideals being so great, that in one of his bequests he left a sum equal to about £3 a day to be spent on entertaining at this palace, to be increased to £6 a day in the month of Rhamadan. Such a quiet place as this palace would be used in the month of the fast as a sort of religious retreat by a great number of the Pasha's pious friends—hence the increased allowance.

We retired about nine o'clock; from what I knew of my hosts, I was sure they would wish to be in the village mosque before daybreak—the sunrise was about six o'clock—so the custom was "early to bed."

Half an hour later, on opening my bedroom door, I saw that my house was in darkness but for the light of a small lantern, and that my two men-servants were already curled up and asleep on their mats in view of my door. The only preparation for sleep they needed was to remove their slippers, and in place of turbans put on the little white skull-cap with openwork edge which native servants sleep in and often retain at their work in the mornings. This same cap is worn by gentlemen, in the privacy of their families, who are never seen by Europeans, indoors or out, without the scarlet tarboosh. At no moment is the head of the Eastern man left uncovered, except in the bath and at the barber's. An exception to this rule is now made at the secondary boys' schools, where the introduction of football has led the players to appear in the field bareheaded.

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My observation leads me to think that the theory of the "no hat" brigade of England is wrong in its contention that to cover the head destroys the hair. I have seen many uncovered Egyptians' heads of all ages, in the home and in the baths, and I have never seen anywhere finer or more abundant hair.

The next morning, after a—providentially—slight breakfast, we inspected the house and grounds, chatting with the many retainers of all sorts—it must be remembered that we are in Islam, where the humblest negro servant takes an interest in and shakes hands with his master's guests—and strolled about the village.

Our host, the Bey, was busy meantime with the managers of the vast estates, his work having begun at the close of the daybreak prayer; his administration being famous, I had heard, for thoroughness and justice. In addition to the Pasha's trusteeship, he has large estates of his own in both Upper and Lower Egypt; only a man with great organising abilities and immense application could cope with such responsibilities. He has eight sons to train and educate, vigorous lads who claim a good deal of attention, and whose independent judgment as to the careers they want to follow is diversified enough to take one of them to Al Azar for the long theological course, one to France for Law, another to England for the study of commerce and political economy, and another to a scientific study of agriculture.

And now we are to visit *the* garden, for the beautiful gardens surrounding the palace, mostly hareem to the ladies of the household when in residence, did in no way fulfil the Pasha's passion for this hobby. Carriages appear, and we set off to drive a couple of miles through

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the rich fields of the Delta, in the direction of the tributary of the Nile, the proximity of water being the reason for this Eden of beauty and delight being separated so far from the palace.

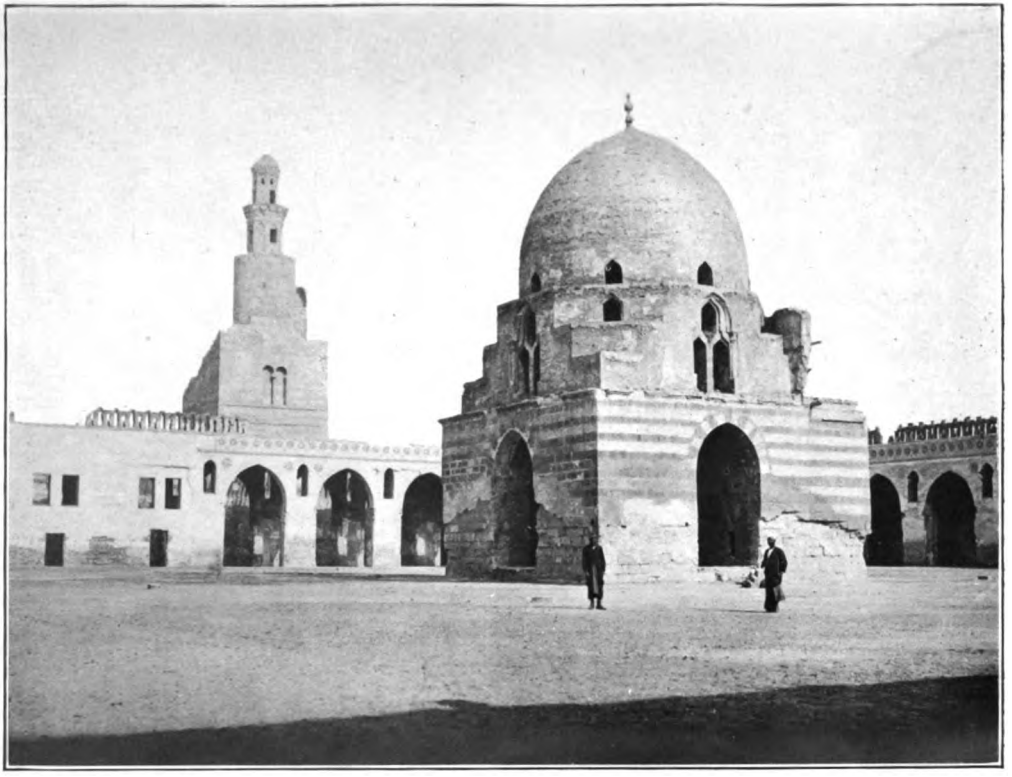
I knew that the extent of the garden was eighty feddans, and that it produced flowers of all sorts, and fruits in abundance and of marvellous rarity, but I was not prepared for such a vision of cultivated beauty as burst upon us as soon as we passed through the gate in the high wall that surrounds the garden.

I have seen many magnificent gardens. I have spent many an hour of entrancement in the shades of that cool oasis, in the shadowless desert, over which Mr. Hitchens has thrown the spell of his genius in *The Garden of Allah*; but I have never seen a spot like this. The glory of the desert garden at Biskra is that in the barren sand, under a tropical sun, a man produced cool shades, trickling waters, a harbourage for man in which the fierceness of the sun could be escaped by means of such glorious vegetation as would not grow without its aid. But it is not a garden of flowers or of fruits.

I have spent delightful hours, too, in that wonderful garden at La Mortola, in Italy, over which the late Sir Thomas Hanbury spent the devotion of a lifetime, in creating a garden of exotic plants which, in point of richness and interest, has no rival in the world.

This Egyptian garden is different from these, with a unique character. In the Pasha's garden, in addition to the wealth of flowers, all the world is made to pay tribute in adding to its beauty and its cool depths of shade, trees bearing the rarest fruits, so that at every season of the year it offers a delicious feast to the visitor,

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

THE ABLUTION FOUNTAIN.

Every mosque has some provision for the ablutions necessary for prayer.

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while, at the same time, all its miles of walks are bordered with beautiful flowers, chosen—as an Oriental always chooses flowers—for the fragrance of their scents.

These same walks are cunningly shaded by endless perspectives of pergolas, over which a bewildering variety of grape vines grow, so that in winter you may enjoy the sun, and in summer they become the coolest of green tunnels. In the autumn, as the foliage turns to those shades of yellow and red which the vine leaf alone knows the secret of, and the luscious fruit, varying from the small black grape to a variety of grape almost as long as a man's finger, hangs invitingly on all sides, this must be an Eden indeed.

In the centre of the garden is a large trellised pavilion, also vine covered, with seats and a central table under which the running waters of the little canals, coursing in all directions through the garden, meet with a pleasant swish. Here a large framed portrait of the Pasha is hung, to remind those who enjoy the garden of the man who made it.

It is true to say that with him this glorious enclosure, which he found a common field, and turned into a place of Elysian delights, was the consoling passion of a life, which, though men envied, yet had the most poignant sorrows.

Every morning, without fail, he would be in the garden with the sunrise; sometimes he would make here his first prayer before the day had really begun. It was only under a loving care like his that such a creation was possible: wealth alone could not have done it. Although wealth could bring treasures of fruit and flowers from all the earth, it could not make them grow as they grow here.

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In this, too, he could not bear to think that when death overtook him his work would cease. The enormous surplus produce of these cherished acres, by his will, may be sold—the water-melons alone in the season are a most valuable asset, for there are none in Egypt like them—but every piastre produced must return again to the garden, to keep it fit and beautiful. And here, again, the Bey is the trusted steward, the perfect state of the garden being witness to his stewardship.

From the pavilion many of the pergolas converged, green avenues—the vines were just coming into leaf—all bordered with lovely flowers. Walking in another direction we found rustic bridges over the watercourses, and smaller summer-houses, with tributary pergolas connecting the main avenues. Here and there Arab gardeners were at work, for the fruit trees, which make a miniature forest of the spaces between the pergolas, need much attention in the early spring.

All the air was filled with the scent of the flowers. Could this be February, while we, in the hot golden sunshine, were in the midst of roses in great masses, with freezia, heliotrope, honeysuckle, violets in wide patches, and stocks on every side. The gorgeousness of one or two scentless flowers had gained them admission—the great African marigold, the resplendent poinsettia, the robust and flaming geraniums, adding colour to the scene; while by the water-edge the graceful irises were growing as naturally and profusely as though nature had planted them. To atone for these scentless things, there was an abundance of the white and yellow jasmine, which must be known as it grows in Egypt by anyone who would understand the ecstasy of sweet scent. I am not surprised that Eastern men carry the

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essence of this flower about with them, and offer a touch of it to their friends, in the spirit in which friends in England offer a cigarette.

In a remote corner near the river we found—such prosaic things does earthly beauty depend upon—an engine shed, a great modern pump, a stack of English coal, with a blue-jacketed engineer and his assistant. With water and such soil as this part of Lower Egypt is rich in, and the perfect climate, all things are possible to horticultural, as to agricultural, skill. One of the uses of the Pasha's immense fortune had been to prove what untold benefits the application of science, in irrigation, as in other ways, are possible of realisation in Egypt.

By one of the green alleys we were brought back to the central pavilion, where we found that a banquet of fruit had been spread for our delectation, with a gorgeous basket of flowers made up, basket and all in Oriental fashion, by the gardeners—to the chief of whom we were now introduced, the man who, under the direction of the Pasha, had helped in the creation of the garden from the beginning. Here were ripe strawberries, guavas, luscious Japanese medlars, a sweet little cherrylike fruit called nabk, bananas of kinds so rare as never to be seen in the market, the paw-paw, cool as snow, and oranges of the choicest sorts grown, with other fruits quite unknown to us—surely a meal fit for the gods.

As all things earthly must end, and even such a garden as this is bounded by mundane conditions, the time came at last when we had to pass through the gate and out into the ordinary world.

We were driven back to the palace for lunch. The

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doctor had been to the garden with us and had, I found, missed his midday prayer—which must be said between the time the sun begins to incline towards the west, and the time when the shadow of a person shall be the length of his own stature. I do not know if he measured the shadow, but with the simplest *naïveté* he said to me in the hall—"I must pray." A servant brought the usual brass jug and basin for his ablutions, and there, in the salemlik, forgetful of all men, Christian and Moslem, he made his prayer. From the distant divan to which I retired, I could hear the fervour of his undertones.

This noon prayer consists of four rikas; the two voluntary rikas, usually performed, he omitted, because of his duty to guests, as he explained. I was glad my presence did not prevent him from making the proper prayer. He is a gentle and kindly man, with a great underlying sadness which a humorous temper does not disguise from his friends. He had told me that but for his religion he would find life a hopeless disappointment.

When, after lunch, we made our adieus, and started for the station, we were laden with flowers, so that we looked like a bridal party. We also carried to the hospital, at Tanta, a wealth of flowers and fruit, to add to the countless petitions for blessings asked there by grateful patients for the soul of the Pasha, whose works, in a full measure, live after him.

At my request the Bey had allowed a clerk of the estate to copy the remarkable Menshawi will, many of the clauses of which, I think, must be deeply interesting, especially to any student of modern Islam; as it seems to me to throw a unique light upon many Oriental ways and thoughts, I give most of its details here.

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The land bequeathed is about 6000 feddans, with all their water-pumps, engines, etc., at Tanta and Santa. The charities are as follows :—

Income of 100 feddans to the schools of the Orwa Al-Woskha Moslem Society.

Income of 100 feddans for the Mohammed Ali Industrial School, Alexandria.

Income of 69 feddans for the new Ahmedy Mosque at Tanta; about 120 piastres (a piastre is 2½d.) daily for bread for the ulemas[1] and students. The remainder to be spent in clothing the poor known to the ulemas. Clothes are to be given to 200 poor persons, male and female; thin cloth in summer, and warm cloth in winter, the exact details of which are stated.

£50 to be spent annually in providing meat and bread for the poor who celebrate the moolids (birthdays of the Prophet and Saints) at the palace of the late Pasha.

£33 to be spent annually for those who read certain Koranic passages every month, and for those who recite the whole of the Koran, at the tomb of their benefactor.[2]

£6 a year for those who recite the suras of Yasin and Tabark and Samadieh daily at the grave of the deceased.[3]

[1] Ulemas are learned men and teachers.

[2] It is usual to recite passages in praise of God, and in thanksgiving to Him, at the tomb of relatives and friends, where God is asked to bless the dead.

[3] The first two of these suras are read near the tombs, because they make mention of death, of good deeds, and of Paradise. Samadieh is Sura cxii.

"Say; He is God alone,
God, the Eternal!
He begetteth not, and He is not begotten;
And there is none like unto Him."

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£200 to be distributed annually in bread among the poor ulemas and students at the Mosque of Sidi Ibrahim Al Desuky, Desuk; being about 50 occas (an occa is about 2½ lbs.) of bread daily.

£50 to be distributed yearly amongst those who recite the Koran at the Mosque of Desuk.

£250 annually to be given in bread (about fifty occas daily) for the ulemas and students at Damietta.

£1326 yearly to be spent in celebrating religious ceremonies at the mosque of the late Pasha, as salaries of ulemas and servants of the mosque, cost of fruit, sweets, and ice; and of this £366 for the cost of bread given to the ulemas and students of the same mosque (about one hundred occas daily).

£454 spent annually for those who recite the Koran at the grave of the deceased; and also for buying mats and carpets, candles and oil for the tomb.

£52 for distribution at the cemetery among the poor; £2 to be spent in buying dates.

£100 to be distributed at the Bairam Feast to poor widows and orphans.

£100 for the cost of cattle, whose flesh is given to the poor at the feast of the Courban Bairam.

£50 annually for those who recite the Koran once every day at Ishnawi, at the grave of the Pasha's parents.

£600 a year to buy clothes for a thousand persons (poor, orphans and the like) for the Bairam and Courban feasts.

£24 a year to buy bread for dogs.

£586 for the ulemas and students of the Ahmedy Mosque; £72 being for bread for those who recite the Koran in the mosque.

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£1000 a year for the support of the kuttabs (Koran schools) founded by the late Pasha in the places where he had estates.

£600 a year to be spent in training religious preachers, whose duty it will be to teach the masses of the people.

£1000 to be spent on the keeping and repairing of the mosques of the late Pasha.

£2000 to be given annually to the Menshawi Hospital at Tanta.

£1500 a year for the support of the almhouses—Takieh—at Tanta; a certain amount of this for the help of poor pilgrims.

£2000 a year to be given to the dependent relatives of Ottoman soldiers who die in war for the Empire; with a certain amount to assist the development of the Hejaz Railway (to Mecca).

£400 a year to support the school for boys, given by the Pasha to the Mohammedan Benevolent Society; and £450 a year to the Waton School, Cairo, of the same Society.

£400 a year for the support of a school for girls, given to the Orwa Al-Woskha Society; and £50 to the Hosn Al-Moserrat School, Zagazig, of the same Society.

£400 a year to the Tanta Government School, as fees for a certain number of poor pupils.

£400 yearly to the Porter's School, Alexandria Customs, and the mosque connected with it.

£3700 yearly to the Industrial School founded by the late Pasha, at Santa; and for the training of poor girls who are to be taught until they are married.

£160 a year to the Ittihad School at Mansura.

For every feddan left to relatives or friends one pound yearly is to be taken, and the capital

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sum is to be trusted to some firm at Tanta, that those who are in need may borrow from it without interest.

£4000 a year to be distributed annually amongst the poor peasants of the Pasha's estates.

£400 annually to the ulemas of Bokhara, who must send £500 a year to each of the following hospitals and dispensaries in Egypt:— The German, the Russian, the Italian, the Greek, the French, the Austrian, and the English.

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BOOK II

REFLECTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS IN THE MOSQUES

"Fools exalt the mosque and ignore the true temple in the heart."
Masnavi I Ma' Navi.

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CHAPTER I

"The Imām, or the Khateeb, would then give a short verbal explanation of the chapter just read, or at times an extemporary sermon, but sitting and in a familiar way. I have often heard much good sense and practical morality enounced on these occasions."

Palgrave, *Through Central and Eastern Arabia*, p. 121.

It is the Moslem's duty to pray "when night hath fallen." This evening with an Egyptian friend I am to go to the Mosque Kekhia, to see the prayer, as I particularly want to hear one of the preaching sheikhs giving moral instruction in a mosque, and to-night Sheikh Mustapha Amir is to speak there.

It is a strange sensation to leave the main European street of Cairo, with its bustle and noise, its cosmopolitan crowds, its insistent street merchants, and its crowded French cafés, in which the modern effendi fancies himself to be enjoying the highest civilised pleasure, and by a slight turn at the corner of the road, up a short flight of stone steps, to enter upon a scene a thousand years removed from all the life outside.

I am wearing a tarboosh, and am counselled by the Moslem friend who was with me to speak no word of English, for it is an unknown thing for a Christian to visit the mosques as I am doing. I have the permission of the sheikh, and I am known to the authorities as a friend, but there are the people to consider, and unnecessary risks are best avoided, as I do not want my inquiries to be impeded.

It is interesting, in view of the experiences in town

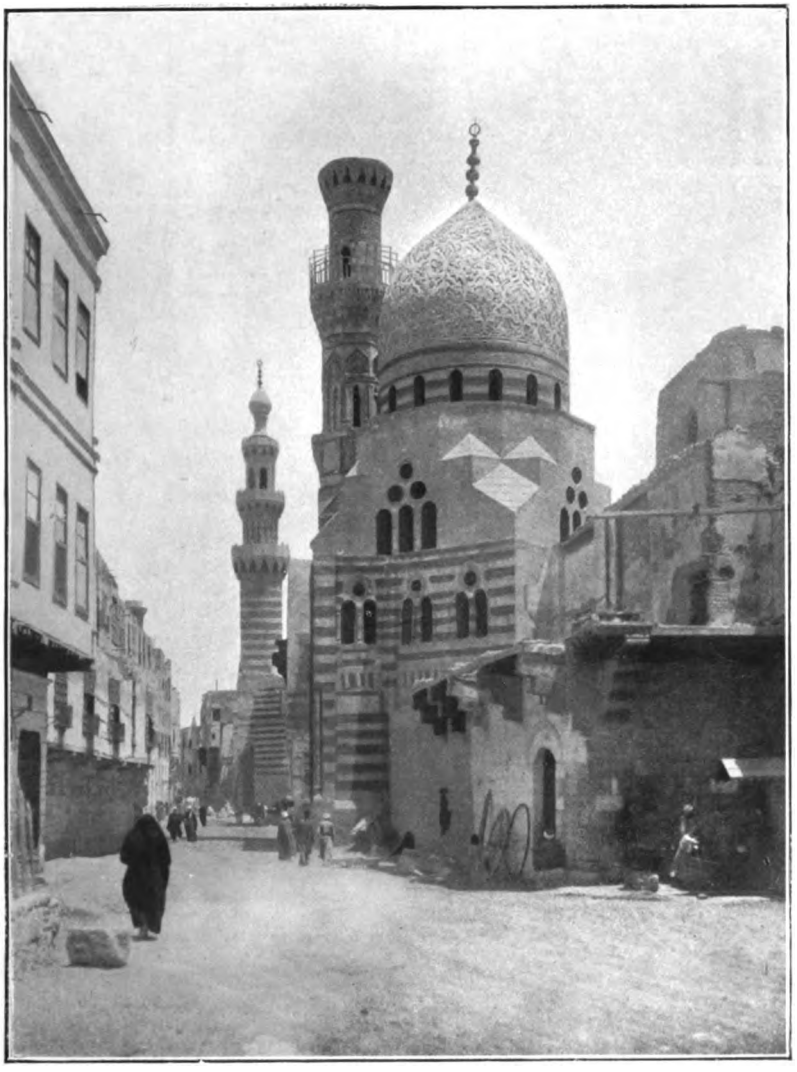
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and country which I relate in this chapter, to read in Lord Milner's book on Egypt: "Everyone knows how deep a prejudice exists in Mohammedan countries against the presence of a Christian in a mosque. In the cities it is wearing off, but in the country districts it is as strong as ever—where it is an unheard-of thing that a Christian should be present at a Mohammedan ceremony, more than unheard-of that he should be present at the instance of the Moslem worshippers themselves."

I wanted to imagine that there was no risk, but a friend has laughingly told me that only a few months since the son of the Sheikh El Islam—the highest dignitary—was passing a poor suburban mosque in Cairo, in what we should call a slum, and, as it was prayer-time, entered and took his place for devotion. A man of rough temper growled at the appearance of such a well-dressed person; another ruffian answered the growl—possibly the European clothes of the stranger excited the flame of resentment—in less than a minute hands were laid on him, he was mildly chastised, and forcibly put out into the street. There were explanations in a day or two, and the young gentleman reappeared at the mosque and made one of the stated prayers, very acceptably to the congregation, as a sign of goodwill. Forgiveness is highly valued by Eastern folk. One of the chief joys of Paradise will be that old friends will be reunited, and old resentments forgotten.

I can say, however, that I never felt any apprehension at entering a mosque under any circumstances, even in the most reserved of sacred places, where I knew that an alien foot had never before been placed. I never

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

DOME AND MINARET.

When a mosque has a dome of this sort it indicates that it is the burial-place of a distinguished person.

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entered a mosque at prayer-time without the consent and countenance of the chief sheikh. I studied every Moslem habit and custom which would help me to avoid offence and not to attract attention. If I was keen to observe every detail, I tried to look incurious and at ease; to be certain and direct, while very quiet, in all movements.

Here was I, in stockinged feet, on the carpet of the Mosque Kekhia, in Sharia Kamel, a street only a stone's-throw from the Opera-House in Cairo. The darkness was only relieved by the light of two oil lamps in large lanterns, of tin and glass, which hung from the roof. The rich brown stone walls, and the crimson carpet, and the mysterious figures of men in Eastern garb, coming in to their prayers, made a picture that was impressively beautiful.

With soft tread we gained a partly retired spot, near one of the great pillars, in the centre of the mosque, and as my friend made his evening prayer, I sat still on the carpet. This is a mosque in which the prayers are made by each worshipper separately, and are not led by an Imām, except of course the Friday noonday prayer, which is always so led. And as many Moslems go into the mosque, not only for prayer but to sit quietly and reflect on spiritual things, or to ask advice of a sheikh whom they expect to find there, or even to converse in an undertone with friends, my sitting there was not remarkable. Many small groups of men were sitting as I was on the carpet, happy simply to be with friends, or waiting for the appearance of the sheikh who was to speak when the hour of evening prayer had passed.

To pray in a certain mosque becomes a firm bond between friends; and as the irreligious know where to

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find an acquaintance by the café he frequents, so the pious make their mosques a meeting-place with such regularity at the daily prayers that a man's absence is at once remarked, and duty demands immediate inquiry; so that, if sickness or trouble have overtaken him, he may be visited in his home and helped.

Here, on the floor of this mosque, is a demonstration of the simplicity and the equality which run through the whole Islamic system, in spite of any of its glaring contradictions and exceptions. Close by me is a group of fellaheen, in their blue galabiehs and brown felt skull-caps; near these, a well-to-do young man, in brown silk robe with fez and white turban, probably a native teacher in one of the primary schools; here is a serving-man from one of the neighbouring hotels, in the white shirt and scarlet waistband, with his scarlet leather babooshes (shoes) by his side. This is no mosque, by the way, for tourists and sightseers who leave their shoes with a guardian at the door and paddle about in slippers. We carry our shoes in with us, and place them, sole to sole, beside us—to place mine with the soles on the carpet would have betrayed me.

A young effendi comes in, in European dress, except, of course, for the tarboosh, with his old-fashioned father, in the black robe and turban. On the other side of me stands a poor labourer, fresh from the ablutions in the fountain court of the mosque, the water still dripping on the carpet from his head, hands, and feet, while his wet brown flesh shines in the lamplight. A rich man, whose silk robe is not kind to his portliness, enters with his servant, and they make the prayer side by side. Here is a poor old man to whom the attitudes and movements of the prayer have become difficult,

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but who yet goes through his devotions with intense fervour, and then sits with his hands as a cup upon his breast for a long time, muttering his private devotions; the "amen" being to stroke the face downwards with the inside of the hands.

Quiet amusement is caused to those of us who are sitting here—those engaged in prayer spare nothing of their absorption to notice anything of what happens—at the appearance of a small boy, of possibly seven or eight years of age, who walks into the middle of the floor straight in front of the Kibla—the prayer-direction towards Mecca—and by watching the men succeeds in making the prayer fairly correctly, failing chiefly in that concentration which does not allow of any turning of the head.

Another picturesque note is added by two or three students from Al Azar, in the special scarlet fez with tassel and the small white turban; while a number of the Nubian bowabs (doorkeepers), who are so numerous in Cairo, where they sit on benches at the doors of all important houses and institutions, in their black robes, serve to accentuate the richness of the general colouring.

After a time, when most of those present had made their prayer, the sheikh arrived, and immediately went to a low square chair standing by one of the pillars—not to the pulpit, which is only used on Fridays—on which he sat, drawing up his legs under the folds of his robe. We all got up from our scattered places, and gathered round him in a squatting semicircle—perhaps about fifty of those who had been present staying for the homily.

A lantern with one candle in it was by the sheikh's

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side. By the light of this he read a few passages from the Koran, and then proceeded to preach from them, quite extemporaneously, in a free manner, touched with quiet humour. His remarks were followed very closely, especially by the fellaheen; the faces of the whole group, reflecting the beams of the flickering candle-light and the dim glow from the two hanging lanterns, being a most interesting study.

Occasionally they assented to the sheikh's remarks, giving their "eiwa" (yes!) with smiling approval. Sometimes they asked questions, to which he gave careful and patient answers. Now and then he turned on *them* with a pertinent question. "Is this not so?" "Shall we do or say this?" "No!" or "Yes!" as the case might be.

His subject was the use and abuse of wealth, with counsel to the poor. He pointed out how inexplicable the differences in worldly possessions must always seem. To the rich, he counselled—be careful how you use your riches, for God will take account; and wealth can only serve you up to a certain point. To the poor, he said they might be rich in God's treasures; they should by no means neglect to strive for prosperity, for the Prophet said, "Honest wealth is good for honest men"; but this must not be to the exclusion of their religious and moral duties. Above all things, men should study to be contented, and to seek peacefulness of mind, which is better than riches. In every condition, they must not neglect the duty of giving alms—holy Koran said, "Who give alms, alike in prosperity and adversity, and who master their anger and forgive others? God loveth these" (Sura iii. 128).

The sheikh spoke for about fifteen minutes. When

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he had finished, he recited a short sura from the Koran and a prayer. All hands went up to the breast, cuplike, as a sign of faith that the blessing would be received, and at the end the hands were drawn down the face.

The sheikh disappeared in the dimness, and we went across the soft carpet to the door, where, putting on the left shoe first, we put that foot on to the step over the threshold, clothed the right foot, and in a moment found ourselves again in the modern world, hustling through the crowd, mostly of tourists and sight-seers, not one of whom would guess that probably the man so smiling and alert who waited upon him at his dinner had come from a scene which a cycle of centuries had done little to change.

Often in the early morning, before the first flush came into the Eastern sky, did I hear the rich voice of the blind Mueddin floating across the still air from the minaret of this mosque, singing the Ulah, or first Call to Prayer—recalling to me, in the half-conscious moments between sleep and waking, that I am in Eastern lands. Resonant and clear rang out the words, "Allahu Akbar . . . Prayer is better than sleep . . . I testify that there is no God but He . . . I testify that Mohammed is the apostle of God . . . He giveth life and He dieth not . . . Oh! the Bountiful! . . . Thy mercy ceaseth not . . . My sins are great; greater is Thy mercy . . . I extol His perfection . . . Allahu Akbar!" And as the sweet cadences elaborated in this first call rose and fell as the Mueddin moved from one side of the minaret to the other, to call to the four quarters of the world beneath him, I thought that anyone hearing the sound could not fail of at least a vague notion of the power of Koranic Arabic to affect the mind of man.

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This preaching in the mosques in Egypt raises a very important question, on which there is universal misapprehension. For instance, Professor Margoliouth, who writes a great deal about Islam, in his latest book, *Mohammedanism*, states that, as for preaching, there is practically none but formal repetition of old sermons, and the preaching of the professional dervish.

Doubtless this, with other misapprehensions, come from the reticence of the Moslems towards the inquiries of strangers, and their aversion to the presence at their services of those not of their faith. At every turn I found that personal contact reveals things which are unknown to those who have only book knowledge of this subject, however profound this may be.

The question of preaching, for instance, has for a long time been engaging the attention of the leaders of Islam in Egypt, with the result that there is now much moral teaching, such as I have heard this evening, as well as many eloquent and original preachers who occupy the pulpits at the Friday prayer. There are several mosques in Cairo which are always closely crowded on Friday by men who choose to make the noonday prayer there because of the fame of the preachers.

The Sheikh Mustaph Amir is one of several teachers who every day go from one mosque to another in a regular order to speak to the worshippers after the four chief prayers: the one at noon, due at the time the sun begins to incline towards the west, and closing when the shadow of a person shall be the length of his own stature. After teaching in one mosque at this time, he will rest till the afternoon prayer at another—due when the sun begins to assume a yellow appearance. At the moment the sun sets, and until the redness of

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the glow disappears from the horizon, is the time of evening prayer, and the sheikh will speak again; going on to another mosque "when night hath fallen," as we have seen him. It will be realised what a great number of men must be reached in this way.

So important is this question of preaching regarded to be now, that in Cairo there is a very influential committee which exists for the encouragement of good preaching. Prizes are offered to theological students for the best compositions suitable for delivery in the mosques, and these are printed and circulated throughout the country.

A short time since, the Sheikh of Tanta heard a young sheikh preach an original sermon to a small country congregation, and, recognising the preacher's gifts of genuine eloquence and moral force, he gained for him promotion to a large town mosque. I will give later outlines of some of the most recent sermons, which will show that moral teaching in Islam is becoming general. There is no doubt that for centuries the sermon was confined to a repetition of those soul-stirring discourses of the Prophet and the early Caliphs, as it was thought wise to restrain the preachers, who began to use the pulpit for political and other ignoble ends; but in Egypt, at least, that day has passed, and the authorities even go so far as to employ "mission preachers" who go from mosque to mosque, and from village to village, calling men to repentance.

The Wakfs Administration in Cairo have recently established six additional itinerant mission preachers, "to travel throughout the country in all the various localities, especially those in which there are no teachers, to preach, to instruct, and to help in the improvement

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of the moral condition of the people." I quote from the last official report, in which regret is expressed at the difficulty of finding suitable men for such important work. It is amongst the students that recruits are being sought. In Alexandria the Wakfs have started ten lecture-rooms, called "Abbassieh," with Koran readers and teachers, and other sheikhs to the number of thirty, for the moral help of the people.

I met in Cairo one sheikh whose life is spent in this way. He is an original and moving preacher, and it is told of him that he was sent to a certain province, where crime had increased in such a way as to greatly perplex the authorities, and the result of his vigorous preaching crusade was to leave the district with an almost clean sheet so far as the more serious offences were concerned. He also visits the prisons and the hospitals, to cheer and admonish the inmates, his visits being keenly appreciated.

I questioned this sheikh on the subject of preaching. His answers were quite simple. The duty had fallen into neglect, but it had not ceased to be a duty. "To exhort and to assist the people in doing good, and to dissuade and whenever possible to prevent them from doing evil," this has always been the duty of Moslems. There is a definite term for such service—Hisba; the man who specially performs it is called the Muhtasib, and to show how much it is a part of Islam, he referred me to the work of the early philosopher and leader, Ghazzâli, who fully describes the duties of the Muhtasib.

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CHAPTER II

"The institution of prayer was jeered at by the Arabs, to whom Mohammed first delivered his message, and one of the hardest parts of his task was to induce in them that pious attitude of mind towards the Creator, which Islam inculcates equally with Judaism and Christianity, but which was practically unknown to the heathen Arabs."

Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, p. 40.

On another evening I went, by invitation of the Sheikh Mohammed el Mahdy, to the Mosque of Azabam, near the city end of the Mousky, the chief of the ancient streets leading into the heart of native Cairo. It is a comparatively new mosque, built by the present Khedive, and although not large, it is richly decorated.

This visit was more formidable than that to the Kekhia Mosque, for here the five daily prayers are led by an Imām, and there is the stated reading of the Koran from the sura chair. Many Moslem friends assured me that I was the only professed Christian who had ever, to their knowledge, sat through such a service without some sort of protest. Ismail, who was with me, had some slight qualms, I think; but as I was received at the door of the mosque by the sheikh, who had to leave us after the greeting, I took off my shoes and quietly walked to a corner at the back of the mosque and sat down in the nearest imitation of the Eastern manner that I could, trusting to the absorption of the close rows of worshippers in front to cover my failure to take part in the rikas or bowings and prostrations which accompany the prayer.

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The ceremonial reading of the Koran always thrills me. I had never before heard it in a mosque, and when a young sheikh, who nimbly mounted the sura chair, began the chosen passages in a sweet and resonant voice, and the worshippers exclaimed at the end of each verse which appealed to them, "Allah! Allah!" as is their custom, the impression of the whole scene—the ordered crowd of men of every condition of Eastern life, the dim lamplight, and the rich colouring—became deeply impressive.

The manner of the reciting of the Koran is the subject of the most particular and prolonged study, as the inflection of each syllable must be according to clearly defined rule. It is not permissible for any man to read the Koran aloud who has not been trained to do so, for fear of conveying a false meaning. In fact, each word has to be memorised from the sound of it conveyed by a teacher who has been specially trained; so that the accredited readers in almost every case know the whole book by rote.

The profession of Koran reader is most commonly adopted by the intelligent blind. The early Moslems would have it that the language of the Koran must be the language of heaven, and very early efforts were made to preserve a uniform pronunciation. But as Islam spread into strange lands, deviations from the pure speech of the people of Mecca crept in, owing in a great measure to the absence of vowel points and other diacritical marks. Eventually the reading was regularised by the allowance of seven different readings, recognised by a School of Readers, whose readings are now universally accepted throughout the Moslem world.

The sura this evening was that beautiful call to

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courage and hope, which came to Mohammed at a time of deep depression :—

"By the noonday brightness
And by the night when it darkeneth!
The Lord hath not forsaken thee, neither hath He been displeased.
And surely the Future shall be better for thee than the Past,
And in the end shall thy Lord be bounteous to thee, and thou be satisfied.
Did He not find thee an orphan and gave thee a home?
And found thee erring and guided thee?
And found thee needy and enriched thee?
As to the orphan, therefore wrong him not;
And as to him who asketh of thee, chide him not away;
And as for the favours of thy Lord, tell them abroad."

(*Sura*, xciii.)

The reading must always consist of at least three verses of a sura; the one most usually recited is Sura cxii.: "He is God alone. God the Eternal! He begetteth not and is not begotten; and there is none like unto Him." It is recommended to read the long suras at the morning prayer, and the short ones at the evening.

This, too, was the night prayer, which consists of four obligatory rikas, generally followed by four further voluntary rikas (called Sunna) made separately, when the ranks formed for the formal and liturgical worship are broken.

The Imām who was to lead the prayer took his place in front of the Kibla, and with him, in every movement, the worshippers became as one man. Together they praised God—"God is most high. . . . There is no God but God . . . to God be praise." They take refuge in God. To Him they ascribe holiness and praise and greatness. Together as one man they bow, and prostrate themselves to the ground, which the forehead must touch, while again they utter praise.

After the prostration the worshipper raises his head

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and body, sinks backward on his heels, when, half-sitting, half-kneeling, he implores forgiveness, "O Lord, forgive me, and have mercy upon me, and grant me Thy portion, and guide me."

Each rika is a repetition, and when all the prayers are ended, the worshipper takes the half-kneeling attitude again, raises his hands as high as his chest with the palms towards heaven, and offers up a silent prayer in his own words, at the end of which he draws his hands over his face as a sign that he has faith in the granting of his petition, and by this action pours the blessing received into the very recesses of his being. After a slight inclination of the head to the right and to the left, saluting the guardian angels, and must be taken also as bows to the congregation of Moslems, he rises to leave. The early morning and the evening prayers are specially important, because then the guardian angels are changed who attend on each living soul, the one on the right hand to record the good deeds, and the one on the left, the bad. When they ascend to their Lord He asketh them, "How did ye leave My servants?" It is good when they say to their Lord, "We left them praying, and we came to them when they were praying."

The Moslem friend who was with me in the mosque naturally had taken his place in the last row of worshippers, while I sat a little nearer to the back wall. My conjecture was right that the intensity of devotion which possesses a Moslem congregation at prayer would be my best shield from observation.

It never had been my intention in Egypt to pretend to anything of Moslem worship, for the sake of any advantage to be gained in my inquiries. On this

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occasion I simply stood up when the rows of men in front of me stood, and as they kneeled and prostrated themselves I quietly sat down in the Eastern fashion; with the result, I believe, that, keenly observant as all Oriental people are, my presence was undetected.

There is nothing more strange to the Western observer than the immovable soberness and intentness of the conduct of the Moslem at prayer. Often on Friday there is an overflow of worshippers at the mosques, who spread their prayer-mats in the street, outside the door, and make the prayer in full public view, while all the distractions of the street go on unheeded. I have seen a group of children boisterously playing under the very nose of such worshippers, who seemed to be utterly unconscious of their existence.

I was once in the evening train at Cairo, waiting to start for Alexandria, when a country Egyptian of the farming class arrived for the same train. He settled his luggage, and then, looking at his watch, went on to the platform, laid his mat so that a lamp-post acted as his Kibla, and made his evening prayer in the midst of a scene of bustle and noise and excitement which only life on an Eastern railway station can create—his expression showing no consciousness of his surroundings.

Proper conduct in the mosque is taught with the earliest lessons of the child. So strict are the rules, that to laugh during the Friday prayer abrogates the prayer, and even requires fresh ablutions. A man must not yawn during his prayers. There must be no hurry, and no lounging. The first safe rule known to Islam was to recall in what manner the Prophet said his prayers, and to imitate that. In the picturesque language of the East, a devout man may not "hurry in prostration

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like a cock picking grain," or spread his arms "like a dog or a tiger."

A curious rule at the stated prayers in the mosque is, that a man must not, when prayer has begun, pass between another man and the Kibla. The act does not nullify the prayer, but it is considered detrimental, and is sometimes bitterly resented; indeed, in earlier days it was no uncommon thing for a man to draw his sword upon the offender. A friend of mine in this very Mosque of Azabam, in Cairo, on a feast-day, when there was a great crowd, inadvertently offended in this way. He was profuse in his submission—"May your prayers be accepted! may you live to pray at Mecca!" is the correct form of apology—but the offended man could hardly be appeased.

Before he begins the prayer, the worshipper says in a low voice, his hands close to his side, "I have purposed to offer to God with a sincere heart, with my face Kiblawards, these prayers." This purpose he must constantly keep in mind to the end.

It is often asserted that the Moslem prayer is only drill—Mr. Gairdner says this in his latest writings. The Rev. W. St. Clair Tisdall goes further, and says the prayers are not only formal, but puerile. I can only assert that all my experience leads me to a contrary opinion, supported by the observation of travellers and others who have lived amongst these people and without preconception or professional prejudice have been able to penetrate to some degree the veil which they throw over their religious observances when they suspect any want of sympathy. More than anything, the Moslem dreads ridicule of his sacred observances, or the teaching of the Prophet. The merest suspicion of it in the on-

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looker, and the chance of gaining any real knowledge or understanding of either the inner faith or the outward manifestation of his religion, becomes utterly impossible. And only those who know the Orient can understand how the cruder mind of the Western observer fails before the subtilty of the Eastern intelligence when there is anything to be concealed.

Can I ever forget the prayers of Islam as I have seen them offered—in the solitude of the desert, in the country village, in the market-place, in the vast mosque of the city, or in the humble meeting-place of the remote hamlet? The evidence of a deep devotional spirit which I have seen, the wrapt expression of a thousand faces glowing with a solemn rapture of the contemplation of God? "Thou mayest see them bowing down, adoring, craving grace from God and His goodwill—their signs are on their faces of the effects of their adoration" (Sura xlviii. 29).

If anything is clear in the first teachings of Islam, it is that prayer must be from the heart. The Prophet taught at all times that of a man's prayers only "such as he offers with understanding and true devotional spirit" are acceptable with God.

There is no doubt that, with the wonderful practical wisdom which gave the Prophet such power with men, he saw also the physical importance of the mere exercise of prayer as he ordered it. The performance of the five daily prayers could not fail to have a great deal to do with the splendid vigour and robust freshness which enabled the Arabs of the first years of Islam to overrun and conquer the world, as they did in less than a hundred years, from Delhi to Granada. In the same way it is admitted that the greatly lengthened prayer necessary

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to close the days of Rhamadan, when a very heavy meal succeeds the long fast from sunrise to sunset, has an excellent effect in promoting digestion, and inducing sleep which would probably be otherwise delayed.

The ablutions, too, make for health and comfort; but because they were made compulsory, it is not to be thought that any of these things in themselves are sufficient for the true and acceptable approach to God. All through the teaching of Islam the theme runs, that God judges motives and aspirations, the outward forms and rites are of minor importance. The ablutions are useless in your worship unless the heart is cleansed, asserts and re-asserts the great Imām al-Ghazzâli. "'Tis the heart I see," declares the thirteenth-century mystic, Mohammed Rumi. "Fools," he says, "exalt the mosque, and ignore the true temple in the heart." Man is not saved by naming the divine names with orthodox accuracy, or by worshipping by exact rules, however fair, but by heartfelt love, and an earnest desire to please God.

Lady Duff Gordon's devoted servant Omar, so sympathetically drawn in her charming *Letters from Egypt*, said to her, "I can't speak to my God if I do bad things," and this is the spirit in which great numbers of Moslems approach the worship of Allah. There are formal worshippers in every religion, and perhaps in Islam formalism is easier in these days of a poor moral state, than in other systems where public opinion asserts itself to interfere with a man's religious observances if it does not approve of his conduct—which interference is forbidden among Moslems, for "God only shall be a man's judge of his motives for worship." But it is a misjudgment to make the sweeping accusation of mere lifeless forms and blind imitation.

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This charge takes no account of the private prayer which is a large part of the worship of the devout Moslem. In many places I have seen men sitting absorbed for long periods in the attitude of private prayer in the mosques and in other places. A great value is placed upon prayer in the mosque, especially at noon on Friday, for there the angels pray for and with the worshipper. But many writers are wrong in saying that therefore private petitions are little used and esteemed. The Prophet said that to pray in the Holy Mosque at Mecca was best; next to that a prayer in "my mosque at Medina is valued by God"; but "of greater worth than all these is the prayer of two rikas a man performs in the corner of his room: of which nobody knows anything but God Almighty."

It was at such prayers that the Prophet wept from the fervour of his emotions, spending whole nights in prayer, until his health suffered; and that Ali, his son-in-law, became so absorbed in his devotions that his body grew benumbed. As that distinguished Moslem, Syed Ameer Ali, says: "The intensity of the devotional spirit embalmed in the Church of Mohammed has hardly been realised by Christendom"; and it never can be realised while the devotions of Islam are dismissed as lifeless forms.

In adversity the people must resort to private prayer, they must fast and repent of their sins. In cases of public calamity all men are called to this duty, to show in every possible way their sorrow, repentance, and humiliation, and to pray privately and alone—the women as the men—in addition to making a great gathering for liturgical prayer in some public place. The question of the Moslem idea of sin is of great importance

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in this connection; for it is frequently stated that the consciousness of sin has no place with these people. It is a question I often discussed with men of every class, from the great Sheikh of Al Azar to my humble village friends, the result of which discussion I will give later on.

A Moslem friend, married to an English lady, who is a Christian, says that his private prayers differ little from those of his wife. A friend of theirs was very ill a short time since, and they prayed together very earnestly for her recovery. At Tanta he has a relative, a pious sheikh of distinguished position at the mosque school, in whose goodness he believes. He wrote at once to him to tell him of their love for the sick woman and their distress at her illness; would the sheikh add his prayers to theirs to Allah for her recovery, for the sake of her husband, their children, and friends?

Was there any suggestion of the "Kismet," with which the East is so readily labelled, in the sheikh's reply? He was glad to have the request; and, moreover, he would join his prayers to those of a band of religious men who each evening meet in the mosque in a sort of spiritual brotherhood to reflect on the things of God and to offer up special petitions to Him. In leading the devotions of these men he would guide their united prayers to the needs of his afflicted friends in Cairo.

A strange comment on the charges both of fatalism and formalism, with which a whole religion is universally branded!

Nothing can exceed the importance attached to Prayer. Amr, the great Arab conqueror of Egypt, in the seventh century, was only taken at a disadvantage when he was leading his army in the Friday prayer,

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which he would not omit. A story is told of another prayer of two Moslem officers, interrupted by a small Roman patrol coming out of the fortress of Babylon—now old Cairo—to fall upon the chiefs while at their devotions. The Arabs at once leapt into their saddles, charged and chased their enemies, who, as they fled, threw off their girdles and valuable trappings. The Romans succeeded in securing their retreat into the fortress; and the Arabs, scorning the booty (and booty was a strong incentive to the early forces of Arabia), returned to finish their prayer. Prayer was always the first thought, in Egypt as everywhere else, on that triumphant march over the world. And the venerable mosque of Amr stands to this day in Cairo to witness that the first necessity of Islam was a place of worship. Here the general placed his standard during the battle, here the conquerors at the first moment of security made their united prayer; here the foundations of the original mosque were at once laid.

It is the same now; the first need of any community of Moslems is a mosque, as the first and keenest desire of every man is to say his prayers acceptably. A year or two since a number of men of one of the West African negro tribes were in Berlin, in connection with an Exhibition. No one could speak their language, and they were evidently restless and unhappy, although well lodged and fed. At last a traveller appeared who was familiar with their speech, and they hailed him with delight. The first word they spoke to him was to eagerly ask—Where is our Kibla, the direction of Mecca!

Formalism, again says the casual or unsympathetic observer. No! the prayer is greater than the place,

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and even the Kibla itself may be ignored. To show this, the Prophet once turned his back on the Kibla in the mosque at Medina, and thus finished the prayer he was leading, the congregation imitating him.

And the Koran says: "To God belongeth the East and the West, therefore whithersoever ye turn yourselves to pray, there is the face of God, for God is omnipresent and omniscient" (Sura ii. 109).

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces in prayer towards the East and the West, but righteousness is of Him who believeth in God, and the last day, and the angels, and the scriptures, and the Prophets; who giveth money for God's sake unto his kindred and unto orphans and the needy and the stranger and those who ask, and for the redemption of captives; who is constant at prayers and giveth alms, and of those who perform their covenant when they have covenanted, and those who behave themselves patiently in adversity and hardships and in time of trouble, these are they who are just, and these are they who fear God" (Sura ii. 172).

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CHAPTER III

"In whatsoever Books God hath sent down do I believe: I am commanded to decide justly between you: God is your Lord and our Lord; we have our works and you have your works: between us and you let there be no strife: God will make us all one; and to Him shall we return."

The Koran, Sura xlii. 13–14.

THERE are in Cairo three mosques held sacred from the sight of the religious alien; even the special orders granted by the head of all the mosques to visit the places of worship in Egypt, make an exception of these buildings. They are the Tomb of the Imām Shaffey, the Mosque of Hosein—or Hassaneyn—and the Mosque of Saida Zeinab.

Two of these sacred buildings I have visited, in spite of the discouragements of the high officials, who would not take the risk of giving me any authority by which I might claim admission. After many vain attempts to visit the Mosque of Hosein, by virtue of my acquaintance with the high dignitaries of the Moslem Church in Egypt, a growing friendship with the sheikh in charge of the mosque, opened doors which it had seemed that the Khedive himself would scarcely venture to unbar. If the sheikh would take the risk—as his judgment served—that was another matter. I certainly am much indebted to Sheikh Mahmoud Ali El Biblawi, "servant of the mosque of Hosein," for the unique services he rendered me.

The first time I went, there were many parlies at the door, as I stood humbly in the street, while my

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Moslem friend interviewed various minor sheikhs and other servants of the mosque inside. All these men came across the carpet curiously to inspect the Christian man outside who imagined he could enter the Mosque of Hosein; the mosque of the sacred relics; where the head of the martyred grandson of the Prophet rests; and the Prophet's own staff, a piece of his cloak, a hair of his beard!

After half an hour or more, during which a messenger had been sent to the Ulema of Al Azar, and a note had come back vouching for me as a friend, I was admitted just over the threshold by an amiable guardian of the door, and with my Moslem companion I sat shoeless on the sacred carpet, by the first pillar, to await events. But patience brought no reward; the chief sheikh did not, for some reason, appear in answer to the note; but two burly minor sheikhs blustered across the mosque, to create an altercation with the servant who had allowed a Christian, for the first time, to enter Hosein and sit upon the carpet "like a Moslem." Such a scene! At the end of which the servant was peremptorily ordered to leave the mosque at once, until a decision as to his fate was arrived at; and I, who did my best to shield the man who had tried to serve me, had to retire defeated.

In a few days I tried again, in company with a friend of high degree. A Moslem, he of course entered at once and was courteously received by the sheikh in his private room. Profound apologies to me, but it was impossible for me to enter, especially as the Holy Carpet was there, receiving the last stitching before leaving for Mecca!

Exactly! I had read in Lane's *Modern Egyptians*

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how the author had entered this same mosque, dressed as an Egyptian, and, acting in every way as a Moslem, had pressed his way through the crowds to see the sewing of the Holy Carpet, the native friend who was with him being very apprehensive for his safety. And I was anxious to see if it were not possible for a Christian, making no concession but the wearing of the tarboosh, to enter, and, without pretence, see the same sight.

A further appeal, this time to the chief of all the great mosques, at the Wakfs Administration offices, produced only a very courteous intimation that everything possible should be done for me, but this particular thing, to enter the three forbidden places, or to photograph at Al Azar University, these it was not in his power to grant. There had been riots, caused by Moslems of the ignorant class, he knew, but extremely awkward in their consequences when the cause of them was a European, and especially an Englishman!

This seemed conclusive, but there was still some faint hope in the sheikh of the mosque Hosein himself, and him I was to meet privately. I now gathered that if he cared to take the risk of admitting me, I might gain my desire. He is a gentle and courteous man, and I convinced him of my sympathy, and that I was no idle sightseer, but was anxious to see and understand as much as possible of Islam and its observances, with the motive of justly representing it. I was invited to be at the mosque the following morning, with my friend Ismail.

To the moment fixed, we were at the door of the mosque, which was very crowded, with much excited coming and going. A special servant was awaiting us, who, as we removed our shoes, went to inform the

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sheikh, who came over to the door to receive us. Opposition melted before us in the good man's company. Without hesitation I crossed the gorgeously carpeted floor of this handsome mosque—pressing through the crowds of both men and closely veiled women—direct to the opposite, or Kibla side. A door was opened, and I found myself in a long narrow room or passage, on one side of the floor of which was laid a section of the Holy Carpet, with a man at work stitching the hem. I had only a moment, it is true, in which to observe the black damask of the "carpet," and the rich gold embroidery of Koranic inscriptions of the band which is designed to go all round the Kaaba, with the silver edging and the green corners embroidered in silver.

After the manufacture of the carpet is finished at the old palace which is guarded as a secret place in Cairo—but which I visited several times and describe later on—it is removed in a great procession to this mosque, where the pious are allowed to see it, and some especially privileged Moslems—men and women—are permitted to add a few stitches to the strings sewn to the outer edge by which it is attached to the Kaaba in Mecca, or to help in the sewing of the lining, which is done in the mosque. This morning a number of ladies were at work upon it in this way, but at the request of the sheikh they withdrew for a short time—reluctantly, it is true—so that I might see it.

I now returned through the narrow door into the sacred mosque, which I was able to thoroughly examine. It is richly appointed, with a magnificent new carpet and specially fine chandeliers. The Kibla is very beautiful. In the court of the ablutions, many men and youths were washing preparatory to the noon

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prayer; while in one corner of the spacious court a crowd of young students were sitting at the feet, literally, of their masters, for this is one of the many mosques allied to Al Azar University.

People read of Al Azar's 13,000 students and are incredulous until they understand that it takes over thirty mosques to accommodate them, most of which mosques are never seen by the ordinary visitor to Egypt.

In the sheikh's private room I discussed with him the question of a Christian's presence in this exclusive place. He said that to the cultivated Moslem there was no objection, but he would not willingly offend the ignorant, who do not like the presence of any man whom they think will be wanting in respect. If, however, any man of alien faith was to be received there, it would be a Christian who would be least unwelcome. In the Prophet's day, even, there were those who made a "scoff and a jest" of our religion, and the Koran warns us against them" (Sura v. 62). This is what those Moslems who object to the presence of strangers are thinking of.

Experience has taught Moslems everywhere to expect that Europeans will ridicule their religion. As Lady Duff Gordon observed: "It rather annoys me to find that Moslems always expect from us irreverence to their religion, which they would on no account be guilty of to ours. I wish the English could know how unpleasant and mischievous their manner of talking to their servants about their religion is. Omar confided to me how bad it felt to be questioned, and then to see the Englishman laugh, or put up his lip and say nothing; he looks like thinking 'all nonsense.'"

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"Is it true," I asked, "as is being so widely asserted now on the authority of the book made famous by the Bishop of London's quotation of it, that every Friday in the mosques at noonday prayer you call down imprecations on the worshippers of Christ?"

His answer was immediate. "It is absolutely untrue. The curse is on the idolater, with whom a Moslem may not associate. With the Christian and the Jew he may join, both in social intercourse, at meat, and in any business connection; and the Moslem man may marry from amongst them. With the idolater, or infidel, as he is called, all this is forbidden, and friendship is impossible. Mohammed's great work was to destroy idolatry, and in all the things he undertook, he made his laws for settling them far reaching and thorough. With idolatry he would have no compromise. Of Christians the Holy Koran says:—

"'Thou shalt certainly find those to be nearest in affection to the Moslems who say, We are Christians. This because some of them are spiritual teachers, and because they are free from pride' (Sura v. 85).

"Allah," the sheikh continued, "has promised to reward the Christians for their good works; He says, 'I will place those who follow Jesus above those who believe not' (Sura iii. 48).

"Also let me read to you another verse from the Koran:—

"'Verily they who believe (Moslems), and they who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians and the Sabeites—whoever of these believeth in God and the last day, and doeth that which is right, shall have their reward with their Lord; fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they be grieved' (Sura ii. 59).

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"This," he said, "is the spirit of our regard for you. Do not let any man persuade you that any word of our scriptures abrogates such a spirit. Our curses are upon our enemies, as your religious curses are, and not upon our friends, or upon those with whom we may be friendly."

I discussed this subject with almost every leader of Islam in Egypt, as well as with simple unlearned men untaught in anything but the Koran and the ordinary practice of the religion they love, and there was not a word of disagreement. The Sheikh Abdul Hamid El Bekri, chief now of the descendants of the Prophet and of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's friend and first successor, was equally emphatic with the Sheikh Al Azar. Abbas Effendi, the Persian leader of the sect of the Bahais, was even more decisive when I questioned him. "By every sort of agreement the curse is on enemies," he said. "Are the Jews and the Christians our enemies? surely they are our friends. Certainly we do not curse our friends."

As the result of these endless inquiries I was quite convinced that there is no thought at all in any mind of cursing the worshippers of Christ. Any passages in the Koran which seem to support this are directed against a form of Christianity with which Mohammed was familiar, in which the Virgin Mary was represented as equal with the Father and the Son, and which, as he considered, included the worship of images of the Son and His Mother. For Jesus, and His Mother, the Moslems have great veneration. Our Lord is mentioned with respect equal with that of the Prophet, and the Virgin Mary is always called "Our Mistress Mary." They believe Jesus to be the Spirit of God, born of a

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Virgin. The invocations of the Prophet in the Koran were directed against those who ill-treated his followers, and to no others, and this is the rule of interpretation of all such texts to this day. "God doth forbid you only to make friends of those who, on account of your religion, have warred against you, and have driven you forth from your homes, and have aided those who drove you forth" (Sura lx. 8, 9). Towards those who did not behave in this way, they were to act even in those days "with kindness and fairness . . . for God loveth those who act with fairness."

Again and again it was insisted to me that it is idolaters alone who are meant. Poor men would say to me, "God allows us to marry Christian women and Jewish women, who may keep their faith, but the Holy Koran says, 'Marry not women who are idolaters' (Sura ii. 220). Could we curse our own?"

A learned sheikh put it in this way. There is a verse in the Koran which speaks of Christians *and* Infidels (Sura ix. 30); is that not proof enough, to those who will not believe us when we speak of our principles and the intentions of our own words, that Christians, as we know them, are *not* infidels to us? The whole connection of the Moslem conquerors with the Egyptian Coptic Christians disproves the cursing, and the war-to-the-knife theory of Islam, so often spoken of by shallow critics; otherwise fanaticism would have exterminated them. And do these writers, like Mr. Gairdner, know—the sheikh asked me—that the whole of the sentences of the Khutbeh (or invocation), in which God is asked to "frustrate the Infidels," at the Friday prayer, is very often omitted altogether?

It was interesting to recall that, as long ago as 1835,

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Lane found that " this sentence and some others were often omitted." In a copy of the Khutbeh given him by a sheikh they had no place.

It was a Christian writer, I was reminded, who had declared : " There is nothing in the original teachings of the Mohammedan religion that requires hostility to Christians. There are, no doubt, bigots and fanatics among Moslems, as there have been, and are now, bigots and fanatics among Christians ; but the spirit of the religion, as taught in its original records, is tolerant. And here we cannot but protest against the unwarrantable emphasis with which certain Christians persist in calling themselves 'Infidels' when professing to represent the light in which they are held by Moslems. No such term is ever applied to Christians, either in the Koran or by intelligent Mohammedans. And for Christian controversialists to insist upon such a use of it is only to foster prejudices which, in this enlightened age, ought to be entirely eliminated from the popular instincts of Christian countries."

Speaking of the extent of any moral instruction in Islam, the sheikh of the Mosque of Hosein said that three times each week he himself gives a lecture to such men as care to assemble round him in one of the courts of the mosque. To my bold request to be allowed to sit with the other learners, he, smiling in a way which suggested polite surprise, nevertheless consented—and, forgetting Oriental methods of fence, fixed an early date.

A few days later found me sitting again in the Mosque of Hosein, in stockinged feet and with the scarlet tarboosh on my head, having entered by a retired court at the back, immediately after the noon prayer, the observance of which I had watched through the door. I had arrived

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in time to hear the call to prayer from the minaret, so seldom noticed in the daytime by the visitor to Cairo, owing to the noise and bustle of the native streets. In this quiet court I could see the muezzin moving from side to side of the gallery of the minaret, as he sang out over the busy city in each direction the impressive summons to the worship of God. His was a resounding and musical voice, trained to right chanting of the Arabic call, which in this quiet haven of the city rang out distinct and compelling—"God is most great! There is no God but God! Come to prayer!"

The sheikh spoke, from the low chair, to an eager group of men of all ages, about forty or fifty in number. His theme was—simplicity and pride. He told, in eloquent language, of the humility of the Prophet who, to the end of his life, performed for himself all personal service, and shared his camel on a journey with a slave who might be with him; of Omar, who even when Caliph, slept in the open air unguarded, saying to those who thought so great a man should have a guard, "If I am not secure in the affection of my people, no human protection can save me." It was the intention of the Prophet that all things in Islam should be simple, and that human pride should be curbed by a sense of responsibility to our fellow-men. He was contented himself to preach from the stump of a palm tree, and in the days of his greatness hated all ostentation. From his finger he removed a gold ring, because it caught his attention in the mosque, and never after that wore anything but a simple silver band. And he and his immediate successors taught a simplicity of conduct between man and man, founded on a sense of the brotherhood of all mankind. A love to display is wrong; it may hurt

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the feelings of a poor brother. Above all, keep yourselves free from pride. "Mankind," said the Prophet, are all the sons of Adam, and Adam was of the earth."

A simple enough sermon, but preached in good Arabic, with its rounded and rhythmic periods, and, illustrated by that wealth of proverb and aptness of statement which belongs, in some degree, to all Oriental speech, it did not fail of effect and appreciation.

On another day I sat, by permission of the venerable Sheikh Al Azar, to hear a lesson delivered to older students in the beautiful room at Al Azar, built by the present Khedive and used only by the great sheikh himself or his specially appointed teachers.

A young sheikh was to take the lesson, young, that is, to be a professor at Al Azar University, where the student course runs into an incredible number of years; he was a handsome, cheerful-looking man, who proved to be quite blind. He was led to the raised seat, and proceeded to lecture on a certain phase of philosophy. Incidentally he was advising his class never to be ashamed to confess that "they did not know." He told how a certain great man in Islam was once asked to reply to a list of forty questions. After much thought he answered eight only of them; to the others he confessed that he had no reply to make, but must inquire of those better able to judge and decide. "If this great man could confess that he did not know how to answer, you lads must be ready, when you go to your work in the distant towns and villages, to hesitate to answer questions, and even to confess ignorance. Much harm is done to religion by ill-considered and hasty answers to important questions, especially in theological matters."

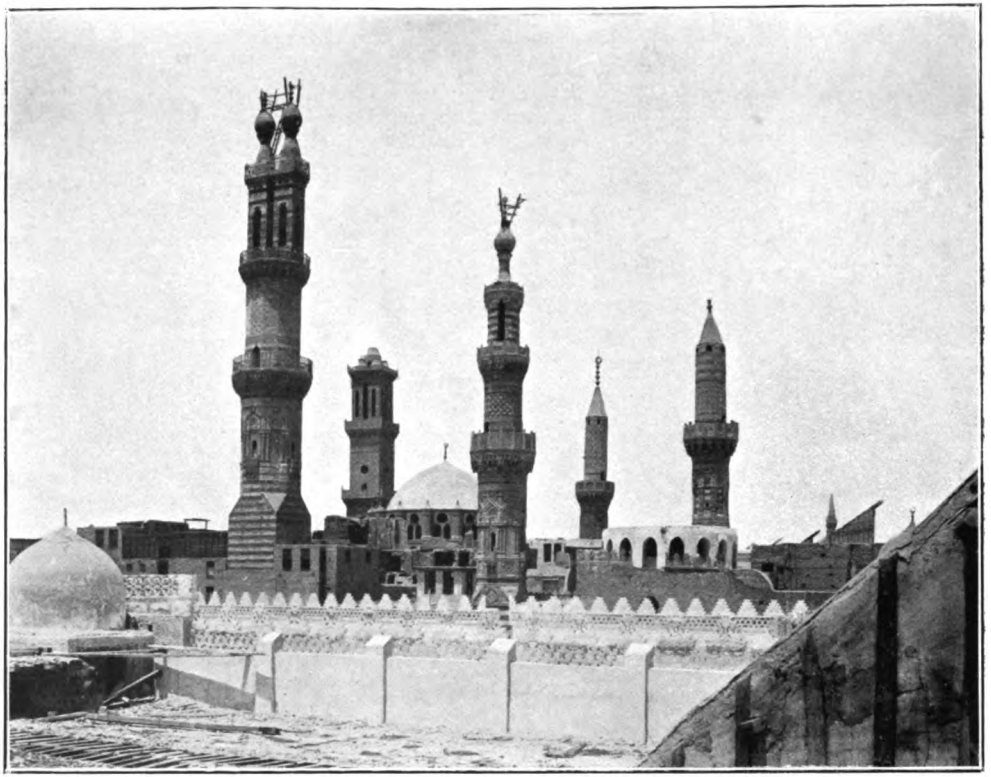
I sat on another day in the private room of the ulemas

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of Al Azar University, most of whom were present and took part in the discussions I unhesitatingly raised on such pertinent subjects as the personal character of the Prophet, Moslem fanaticism, the "cursing of Christians," the absence of repentance for sin alleged against them, and so on, the venerable Sheikh Al Azar having placed me on the divan by his side, with attentions almost affectionate in their courtesy. I could not help smiling to recall the statement of a writer as recent as Mr. Stanley Lane-Poole in his book *Cairo* (1898): "The tendency of these studies is inevitably towards fanaticism. The ulemas and professors of the Azar are, as a rule, the most bigoted of their race, and at times it would be almost impossible for a Christian to set foot within the building without danger of insult and even personal injury." Well, the sheikh himself aided and abetted my making many friends there amongst the students and professors; my camera even was now no offence, in spite of the special law I have mentioned, to save the youths the vexations of casual tourists. How often have I shared the frugal meal of one of these poor alumni so readily and smilingly offered to one of whom they knew little, but that he felt for them interest and respect.

I have said that the Mosque of Hosein is specially sacred because it contains the cherished relics. Later on I heard that in celebration of the moolid, or birthday, of Hosein, the relics of the Prophet were to be exposed to the gaze of the people. By this time I had become known to all the "servants of the mosque," and the sheikh, the chief "servant," was very friendly. He knew I should like to see the sacred objects, but the suggestion was unique, and he could not commit him-

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

THE MINARETS OF AL AZAR UNIVERSITY, CAIRO.

The call to prayer from these minarets is taken as a signal by all the mosques in Cairo.

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saints, and probably
the keeper of the
the founder of an
influence beyond that
." The following
own words, as nearly as
in addition to the
its opinions for me.
duty of obligatory to pay
between Him, Heaven, and
commanded for their saintli-
the most ignorant visitor
the dead, and he will
first of all, above
Allah, the Almighty
dead, and praises
good deeds that
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alised sometimes in a material, way. The former kind of help hat which the body receives from istance is realised by the purifica- every thought but that of God. was talking to me, in his quiet rvant was silently passing in and ng a mysterious word or hint to ld not understand. I afterwards ngaged in quietly watching the lics were being shown, with the a favourable moment—if such o much desired.

ick word from the sheikh, and in d into the mosque itself, where ds had abated a little; a sharp , and I was in the relic chamber. reathless moment only three or They took a swift look at me p excites suspicion, for a true move his moustache—but the e, as he puts his upturned hands utters a prayer, turns attention y for a moment at the objects e. We turn, and I am back in om in no longer time than it e words—the first non-Moslem om, my friend assures me, since l there.

that when the German Crown visited a mosque where one of eikhs in the history of Egypt hinted a desire to enter the

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self to definite consent. I might visit him, however, on the appointed day; which, by the way, anticipates the birthday of Hosein for the reason that on the actual day the mosque is now entirely closed, owing to the wild grief shown by the Persians, who particularly venerate the son of Ali, which grief used to culminate in scenes, now discouraged, of ecstatic frenzy in the mosque which contains the head of their saint. The horrible procession on the night of the moolid which passes the closed doors of the mosque is now deemed a sufficient indulgence of the sentiments of the Persian Moslems in Cairo.

Arrived at the mosque, I found it was crowded to-day with men, some sitting in rapt contemplation, others bowing and prostrating themselves in prayer, others offering up private petitions, while a constant stream passed in and out of a chapel on the left of the Kibla. I was taken straight to the private room of the sheikh, where, of course, the inevitable coffee was served as the first sign of hospitable welcome, a point of Eastern etiquette which even the mosques have the facilities for observing.

Very charming are the courtesies and the compliments of a gentleman of the rank of this exalted sheikh. He had longed to see me again; I honoured him by my visit; I was doubly welcome. With British bluntness I plunged at once into questions to provoke discussion. Would he give me his views on the visiting of the Tombs of Saints, which is such a feature of Islam, of the intense interest of the people in the relics and memorials of the distinguished dead. Professor Margoliouth says that the reformed Islam of Egypt has attacked the belief "in the persistence of living pioneers in the dead bodies of the saints, a notion which

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has given rise to an excessive cult of saints, and probably led to not a little charlatanry; for the keeper of the grave of the saint, if the latter be the founder of an order, has a tendency to acquire influence beyond that of the saint's legitimate successors." The following are the sheikh's views, in his own words, as nearly as a translation can give them; for, in addition to the spoken word, he has since written his opinions for me.

Some people think it is a kind of idolatry to pay such homage to the tombs of martyrs like Hosein, and the men of Islam who are remembered for their saintliness or courage. But ask the most ignorant visitor why he pays such reverence to the dead, and he will undoubtedly answer that he is here first of all, above every other thought, to worship Allah, the Almighty God; he remembers the mighty dead, and praises them as being nearer God for the good deeds that distinguished their lives on earth, and Allah may be disposed to listen to their pleadings. He never for an instant thinks that there is any but the One God, to whom all worship should be devoted.

The sheikh considers that the visiting the tombs of the saints and martyrs makes a good impression upon the spirit of the visitor, and inclines him to think upon the virtues and noble deeds of the deceased, which may lead him to try to follow a great example. It is always good to do anything that will make the people think of spiritual things. The Prophet said, "To think for an hour is better than to worship for a year." There is no foundation for the charge of idolatry in this matter.

The object of prayer for the dead, and visiting their tombs—said Avicenna, a Moslem philosopher of the eleventh century—is to beg for the help of those pure

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souls, a help which is realised sometimes in a material, sometimes in a spiritual way. The former kind of help may be compared to that which the body receives from the brain; spiritual assistance is realised by the purification of the mind from every thought but that of God.

While the sheikh was talking to me, in his quiet voice, a confidential servant was silently passing in and out of the room, giving a mysterious word or hint to his master, which I could not understand. I afterwards found that he was engaged in quietly watching the room in which the relics were being shown, with the object of suggesting a favourable moment—if such arose—for the visit I so much desired.

At last a nod, a quick word from the sheikh, and in a moment I had passed into the mosque itself, where for the time the crowds had abated a little; a sharp turn through a doorway, and I was in the relic chamber. There were at that breathless moment only three or four old men present. They took a swift look at me —my shaven upper lip excites suspicion, for a true Moslem will never remove his moustache—but the trusted sheikh at my side, as he puts his upturned hands upon his breast, and mutters a prayer, turns attention from me. I look keenly for a moment at the objects in the glass-fronted case. We turn, and I am back in the sheikh's private room in no longer time than it has taken to write these words—the first non-Moslem to have entered this room, my friend assures me, since the relics were deposited there.

I afterwards heard that when the German Crown Prince was in Egypt he visited a mosque where one of the most venerated sheikhs in the history of Egypt is buried. The Prince hinted a desire to enter the

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chapel in which is the tomb, but powerful as the ruler of the mosque is—and no living man is more revered—the sheikh felt that he could not risk the effect on the minds of the Moslem people of such a visit. The subterfuge to avoid a refusal of a royal request was characteristic of the Oriental mind. A word to the guardian of the tomb, and before the Prince in his perambulation of the mosque reached the sacred dome, the door was locked and the key hopelessly mislaid.

There are six relics of the Prophet kept in the Mosque of Hosein, and which I saw. These are :—

i. Two hairs of Mohammed's beard, kept in a bottle covered with green velvet, put within a silver box.
ii. The spoon for the use of al kohl (the darkening matter used under the eyes) which belonged to the Prophet. It resembles a small silver spoon of modern shape.
iii. A garment worn by the Prophet.
iv. A piece of Mohammed's shirt.
v. A copy of the Koran in Imām Ali's own handwriting. It is in Kufian letters, on deerskin; about 503 pages, kept in a box of wood.
vi. A Koran in the handwriting of Osman ibn Affan, in Kufian letters, on chestnut wood, about 135 pages, carefully bound up.

These relics, the sheikh told me, were in the possession of the house of Ibrahim until the seventh century, when the Caliph Al Zahen bought them for a sum of no less than £60,000. They were kept at Old Cairo until Al Malek Konsowa Al-Ghouri built the domed chapel, now bearing his name, as a receptacle for them,

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which was known as the Vault of the Relics. Lane, writing in the year 1835 A.D., said: "A shirt which is said to have been worn by the Prophet is preserved in the Mosque Al-Ghouri in Cairo. It is not shown to any but persons of very high rank." They were kept there until 1275, when they were transferred to the Mosque of Saida Zeinab. Again they were moved, to the Citadel, where they remained until 1304, when they were taken to the Wakfs office, and in 1305 to the Palace of Abdin. In 1305 H.H. Tewfik Pasha, Khedive of Egypt, decreed their removal to the Mosque of Hosein, where a chapel was magnificently prepared for the relics, with the beautiful case in the eastern wall in which I saw them.

Cairo will never forget the gorgeous procession arranged for the removal; indeed, the sheikh asserts that the ceremony was without parallel in the modern history of Egypt. The crowd which flocked to see the procession was tremendous. There went to Abdin Palace all the Princes, the Ministers, the Persian Consul, the ulemas and notables, the high officials and principal merchants of Egypt.

The relics were placed in the Khedive's grand reception-room, on a rich cloth of green velvet. At the appointed time the Khedive called to his presence the Grand Kadi and the Grand Mufti of Egypt, the Sheikh Al-Azar, the Sheikhs Al-Mahdi, Al-Bekri, and Al-Sadat, as representing all the chief offices and nobly descended families of Islam.

After a chapter of the Koran had been read, the Khedive took the Garment of the Prophet in his own hands, and ordered other princes and high officials to carry the other relics. This procession walked through the palace, as far as the salemlik leading to Abdin Square, when the chief descendant of the Prophet, Syed

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Abdul Babi Al-Bekri took charge of the relics. As they were brought out into the square, the firing of cannons and military music saluted the sacred antiquities.

Then the great procession started, preceded by horsemen and soldiers; all the sects and Guilds—or the "Ways of Islam," as they are called—with their differing banners, following. There were cavalry and footmen of the Egyptian Army, with bands; the ulemas and Moslem dignitaries, followed by twenty servants in rich uniforms, bearing costly perfumes for sprinkling upon the populace—always a feature of Oriental religious processions. Then came the bearers of the relics, followed by the Cabinet Ministers and other high notables. The number of those who took part in the procession is said to have been 30,000; while the onlookers numbered over 200,000.

In the year 1311 a special chamber—the one in which I saw the relics—was built by order of the present Khedive, H.H. Abbas II. I regretted that I had no time in which to examine the rich inscriptions with which the walls of the chamber are now decorated.

It will be remembered that these are all Moslem dates, the calendar beginning with the year of the Flight, El-Hijrah, 622 A.D.

Of the most precious relic of all, the head of the Martyr Hosein, which is kept in a separate chamber, a vault, and which there was no chance, I was convinced, of my seeing, the sheikh very kindly gave me many details. This most jealously guarded relic has been seen by few living men. Indeed, it is related that a certain Ameer, in the time of Mohammed Ali, determined to force a way into the vault to see for himself what it contained. Two men were first sent by him

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into the vault, and when they returned one was found to be blind and the other dumb—one saw nothing, and the other could never describe what he saw! With quiet pride the sheikh told me that he had the honour of entering the sacred place a few years since, when it was observed that a part of the foundation was threatening to give way. He made a report on the subject to the Wakfs Administration, who at once undertook the necessary repairs.

The martyr's death took place on the 10th day of the sixty-first year of the Hijrah. Amr ibn Saad carried the head to Kufa, gave it to Ibn Zayyad, who carried it through the city, and sent it to Zazid, at Damascus, who ordered it to be exposed for three days, and then taken through the country to Askalan, whose Ameer was a pious Moslem. The Ameer buried it "in an excellent place," where it remained till 491. Then Al Afdal, the general of the army at Damascus, disinterred it with solemn ceremonies, and placed it in what he considered a more suitable spot.

In the year 548, Askalan was threatened by a European power, and thereupon the Ameer of that day, Ayyash, sent to the Caliph Al-Faez, in Egypt, informing him that the head might fall into the hands of Europeans, and entreating him to send a deputation to take charge of it. The caliph was at the time a boy of eleven years, and the power was in the hands of the Prime Minister, Talaih ibn Ruzaik, who promptly sent an army, under the leadership of Maknoun Al-Khadem, to whom he granted £30,000. When they arrived at Kuttieh, they were received by the Ameer, who bore the head and delivered it to the general.

In Cairo a mosque was built for the head outside

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Zoueilah Gate—the well-known Bab Zoueilah, where the pious pray and tie rags and attach teeth to the studs of the gate—opposite Darb-ul-Ahmar, now known as the Mosque of Al-Saleh. The head was washed in this mosque, upon a board, strips of which are said to be those now hanging on the walls of the mosque. But the family of Al-Faez objected to the head reposing in that mosque, as it was not actually inside the city of Cairo, and insisted on its removal to the caliph's palace, where the present dome—or "sheikh"—was built for it, the Mosque of Hosein being built over the dome, on the very spot where the famous green steps of the palace were.

Lane tells a strange story of how proof was conveyed in a wonderful dream, of this head being actually in Cairo. The sheikh related to me the following somewhat similar anecdote, which is, however, so far different in detail and names as to be worth recording:—

Shuhab-el-Deen, a former Grand Mufti (chief judge) of Egypt, was asked by the Imām Sharani to visit the mosque. He did not believe that the head was there, but complied with the request. During the visit he fell asleep, and saw in a dream a man in white clothes, who came out of the Prophet's grave at Medina, and said, "Oh, Prophet, Sharani and Shuhab-el-Deen have come to visit your daughter's son's tomb." Thereupon the Prophet said, "May Allah accept their devotion." Shuhab then awoke, crying, "I now believe—believe and am fully convinced, that the head is here in this mosque of Hosein."

Another miraculous story told me by the sheikh was that a certain Salah-Al-Deen caused displeasure to the Caliph Al-Molek Al Naser, by declaring that a

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certain Egyptian notable knew all about the secret treasures of the caliph's palace. The man was brought and questioned, only to deny the statement. The caliph then ordered that the man should be detained, and that on his head should be placed a number of beetles, to be kept there by a wrapping, so that they might cut into his skull, and, after causing slow torture, eventually kill him, if he did not seek relief by disclosing any knowledge he might have become possessed of. But as he did neither disclose anything, nor show any signs of pain, the wrapping was removed, and the beetles were found dead. To the caliph's astonished questions he replied, "I bore the head of the blessed Hosein on my head, when it was brought to Cairo, and so it is not in the power of anything man can do to me to injure my head."

The sheikh told me that the Ameer Hassan, who built the tomb for the head, made a coffin for it of ebony, ornamented with ivory and silver and covered with embroidered silk. The sheikh's opinion is that the original coffin and cover have been changed, as the coffin, as he saw it, is of simple wood, in an ornamented cover, bearing writings in silver threads. On the door of the tomb there are four silver rings, and round the table on which the coffin rests there are twenty-three jars of the finest crystal, bearing the name of Al-Malek Al Zaher Abu Said, and the Koranic verse, "God is the light of Heaven and Earth." These jars are estimated to be worth over £2000. The coffin stands on a support of ebony, covered in a green cloth. Round about it are great quantities of rare perfumery materials, the scent of which is still fresh.

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CHAPTER IV

"Egypt has always been a soil favourable to the development of mystic tendencies. Christian asceticism took early root there, and during the first centuries of our era thousands of anchorites inhabited the deserts of the Thebaid, and carried on there religious exercises of extreme austerity. We do not know what secret connection may exist between the climate of the valley of the Nile and the character of its inhabitants, but if the Arab chroniclers deserve any credit, Arab mysticism originated in this country." Claud Field, *Mystics and Saints of Islam*, p. 167.

I was honoured with an invitation to a banquet "in Eastern style" by the Sheikh Ahmed Mehsen, who is the present hereditary chief of the sacred and beautiful tomb and mosque of the Imām el-Châfi'î (generally called the Imām Shaffey), "in the desert outside the walls of Cairo," to celebrate the moolid or birthday of the Imām, which is one of the great events of the Moslem year in Egypt. All the guide-books give an account of the great theologian, who is one of those four great Imāms of Islam whose teachings are of paramount influence and importance. Egypt is naturally proud of having cherished one of these leaders, and makes much of the possession of his tomb.

We passed, on the way out from Cairo, an endless stream of people wending their way to pray at the tomb, with a good sprinkling of beggars and rogues who sought to gain something from passers-by "for love of the saint." As it was Friday, the Moslem Sabbath, as well as the moolid, an unusual number of people had decided to "visit the Imām"—for the Moslem always speaks, when he goes to a grave, of paying a visit to a dead

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person; the spirits of the good being thought to hover near their tombs.

The endowments left by the pious in honour of El Châfi'î are extremely rich, and the Sheikh Ahmed Mehsen, who has charge also of the Imām Lissy tomb, is a man of great importance in the counsels of his compeers, being a member of the General Assembly.

A fine residence adjoins the mosque, and here we were welcomed by the courteous and genial sheikh with Eastern cordiality and compliment. The house, the tomb, the mosque—are all mine.

The first pleasure is, of course, to drink the ceremonial coffee, while we rest and chat in the salemlik, while through the open windows comes the buzz of the assembling crowds. Then the sheikh, and his brother, "take permission" to leave, in the polite way of the East; they must make their ablutions for the noon prayer, which the sheikh will lead.

The call rings out from the minaret; already the mosque is crowded to the last inch of available space. I should like to see the prayer of this enormous multitude, but it is deemed impossible to make a place for me actually inside the mosque. I go, however, to one of the open windows in the Kibla end of the mosque, and there can hear and watch the service to greater advantage than being in the midst of the close rows of worshippers inside.

There is no deviation from the concentration which always marks the Moslem prayers. These rows of worshippers call upon their God, and humble themselves to the ground before Him, with a fervour of expression which is always moving to behold.

The sermon was an example of the unreformed

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preaching, the recitation of one of the very ancient discourses which are so familiar to the worshipper's ear that the only merit they have is that they are short; five minutes exhausted the preacher's memorised stock.

Prayer ended, the crowds made their way to the tomb, and I returned to the house, to meet a number of youthful relatives of the sheikh who, including his son, were able to speak to me in fluent English. They wore, however, the Egyptian galabieh, as they were at home on holiday, although when they go into Cairo to school they appear in modern European clothes; as, unfortunately, do all the pupils in the Government schools.

Our Western garments may be convenient for our bustling habits, but they are not suitable for the customs of a religious Moslem. But then how little provision is made at the schools for the practice of religion. We complain of the growing race of "the godless effendi," and deplore in that burningly unjust phrase which Lord Cromer misquotes—with an added injustice—from Stanley Lane-Poole, "that an upper-class Moslem must be 'a fanatic or a concealed infidel.'" But we do our best to wean the new generation under our charge from the only form of godliness at present possible to them, giving them nothing in its place. What, for instance, is the size of any one of the school mosques, as compared with the number of boys in the school? Or what encouragement is given to the one sheikh attached to the school to impart religious instruction? As a rule, the tiny mosque will not hold more than about one in ten of the Moslem boys at the schools, and religious teaching is discouraged. The truth might be stated in this way. Unless these school-boys have something of the zeal we call—in people of

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other religions—fanaticism, they will drop all the observances of their religion as inconvenient and unpopular with the authorities; if they are inclined to godlessness, nothing will save them from atheism under the present conditions. Every year four hundred of these boys are in England to continue their studies at our universities and colleges. What is being done to save them from a godless and abandoned life in the midst of temptations which, under the freedom of our social customs, are even greater than those of their own land? It is a lamentable thing that there is no mosque in England in which these boys may worship God, nor any spiritual guide to give them any help or advice.

But this by the way. These schoolboys, very courteously—at the request of the sheikh—took me to the beautiful thirteenth-century mosque and the tomb, explaining all the details with great pride. The interior of the dome is richly decorated in red and gold, having a most gorgeous effect. The actual tomb of the great Imām inside is a fine piece of work. It was touching to see the people pressing round it with upturned hands, silently praying to God, with redoubled eagerness, because of the communion of the saint which they felt they were enjoying in that sacred spot. I heard no word of protest at my presence on this day of the moolid. Now and then a man would inquire of one of my youthful escort, "Who is this?" but the smiling reply, "A friend of the sheikh," was always satisfactory.

On the way back to the house I remarked on the delightful model of a ship which surmounts the centre of the dome. The sheikh, who had come out to meet us, explained that the ship was intended to represent the wise Imām as having traversed a whole sea of know-

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ledge. The ship is so made that it will contain a quantity of grain (about two bushels) at one end, and a gallon of water at the other. In the month of Sha'bân the boat is filled, so that the birds of the air may have a feast; and at any other time of the year it is open to any generous Moslem to send the grain for this purpose—a servant of the mosque will always undertake the lading of the ship.

The Moslem people are ardent lovers of birds, and are generous in their provision of food and water for them, often associating this kindness with veneration for their dead, as in this case. In Algiers almost every grave in the cemetery has a little drinking-well cut out of the marble slab on the top of it, which is filled with water by the women on their regular Friday visits. In Upper Egypt the birds by their tameness show how fearlessly they live with mankind (and, what is more curious, boykind). I have, more than once, passed a pair of beautiful little owls, huddled together on the bough of a small tree, within arm's length of the well-worn footpath along which I was passing—and this within a few miles of Luxor.

In Mecca the flocks of pigeons—a distinguished pilgrim, who accompanied the Khedive to Mecca, told me—are so tame that they regularly alight on the shoulders of pilgrims and others. There is a special provision of wheat provided for them by a charity or "wakf." In the western part of the city certain poor women sell corn to visitors for feeding the birds, and there is a fountain set apart for them to drink at. People like to believe that these pigeons are descended from the very pigeons which made a nest on a ledge at the entrance of the cave in which the Prophet was

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hidden during the Flight from Mecca. The sight of the nest, and a spider's web spun across the entrance, convinced the pursuers of Mohammed that there was no need to search the cave, to which circumstance he owed what was naturally regarded as a providential escape.

At the sheikh's house we found that lunch was awaiting us. I shall have occasion later to describe the food offered in one of those great native banquets which the Egyptians prepare for their friends, so I need not go into details now. We first go to the table and secure our serviettes, which are of double size, and take them to the outer room, where a servant stands with the spouted ewer of the East, to pour water over our hands; we use the serviette as a towel, and at once return to the table, and take our places without any ceremony. The meal lacks nothing of that bounty and profusion which may be at once the delight and fear of the Englishman whose appetite has been trained to consider three or four meals necessary in one day, and so refuses to accommodate itself to what is practically the single formal meal of the twenty-four hours.

We ate with our fingers, of course; a piece of the dry native bread-cake taking the place of all the multitudinous implements of the table to which in Europe we are accustomed. A whole turkey, of great dimensions, appeared, which had been slightly cut in the kitchen in such a way that we had little difficulty in pulling it to pieces. Dishes of meat, of fish, of game, things roasted, and delicious stews, vegetables, rice, herbs. With unfailing solicitation, titbits were selected for me, as the guest of the day. I was pressed to eat of every course, and knew that courtesy said that no dish must pass untasted.

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At last we passed the over-plentiful meat courses, and delicious sweets and fruits appeared, a sign that the end of the banquet was now in view. There is an informality about the ending of an Egyptian meal that at first seems like rudeness to a European. Whoever has first finished, whether host or guest, gets up at once and leaves the table, and taking his serviette, goes to wash—it is no discourtesy to leave a guest at the table. In addition to the hands, these men all wash their teeth after a meal, very thoroughly, making a lather with the soap, which they declare is not unpleasant as they rinse it out with clean water at once. They are much surprised that the Western people do not regularly wash the mouth and teeth after eating.

It is worth noting that during a recent "health week" a famous dentist has been advising the poor people of England to clean their teeth regularly with "a little soap and powdered chalk," as the most effective and the cheapest dentifrice.

There are no people more gay and genial than those of the Arab race when they are entertaining their friends. There is abundance of the good-humoured "chaff," the verbal play, and the punning joke in which all the people of the East delight. There is a whimsicality in their badinage which once led Lady Duff Gordon to say that she could trace the genealogy of Don Quixote straight up to the modern Arab. Good fellowship knows no more delightful votaries.

I have spoken of the Moslem friendship for Jews; on one side of me at the table was a young Jewish gentleman from Cairo, whose intimacy with the family of the sheikh was such that he was always privileged to visit them, uninvited, for the Friday meal. The

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Moslem friend on the other side of me suggested that the "fanaticism"—especially on the day of the moolid—of the party would require at least the assassination of the Jew before he left! But as he accepted a seat in our carriage, and drove back with us to Cairo, I can answer for his safety. He told me he has lived with Moslems, as friends and neighbours, all his life. Arabic is his native language. Of fanaticism of the Moslem towards the Jew he knows nothing.

Another interesting visit was to the mosque of the Demerdache Order, in the suburbs of Cairo, by the special invitation of the Sheikh El-Demerdache. Thursday is a crowded day at this mosque, when great numbers of people gather there for special prayers. The road leading to the mosque was like a fair, with stalls and booths—to say nothing of the beggars.

The sheikh received us very graciously in his spacious house adjoining the mosque, which, like most of the houses of the well-to-do classes at the present time in all parts of Egypt, is in the process of enlargement. It was curious, in the atmosphere of the ancient East, with the mystic influences of a saint's tomb about us, where every year numbers of fasting devotees gather at the moolid of the saint and immure themselves in the little chambers which we can see leading off the court, to hear the sounds of an excellent piano, on which the sheikh's daughter, whose education and accomplishments are well known even in a land where women are secluded, was playing the latest Parisian music.

Like most of the sheikhs in charge of the important tombs, my host, Syed Abaer-Baheem el-Demerdache, the President of the Order, holds the post by virtue of his descent from the saint; and he, too, has great

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possessions. Just as the piano is a sign of the modern developments in the hareem, there is more than one fine motor-car in the garage of this house, to make a link between the past and the present for the sheikh himself.

After coffee in the salemlik, we visited the lovely garden—the date is the 4th of January—where the sheikh gathered a bunch of such flowers as we expect in England in July, roses and jasmine being especially cultivated for their fragrance. These are for my wife, with a valuable gift of jasmine scent in addition.

As we walked in the garden, the call to sunset prayer went out with remarkable sweetness from the minaret, and after enjoying the wonderful glow from the western sky which lit up the whole of the scene about us with a strange beauty, we were taken, just as the prayer finished, into the mosque tomb, by the sheikh himself; somewhat to the astonishment of the people gathered there, for it is obvious that alien visitors are rare, as no slippers are provided. Many men remained after the formal prayer for their private petitions, sitting on the carpet, with their hands to their breasts, and one could hear the quiet groaning sounds, as odd words of their petitions escaped them. Round the enclosure of the saint's tomb itself were many people, pressing to be near it, some of them kissing the wooden screen.

Walking out into the court, the sheikh shows us the small cells, sixty-five in number, just big enough each to hold a single man, in which the brotherhood live during the three days of the moolid. They are small, and quite bare, and the narrow slit in the doors admits the only light and ventilation. Some open on to the floor of the mosque court, and others above them on to a narrow outer gallery.

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The story of the Order as the sheikh himself told it to me, is this. About five hundred years ago a certain Mohammed, a Moslem of Afghan or Circassian origin, was made captive by a certain Kaid Bey, who brought him into the Nile Valley as his slave. Mohammed's integrity soon gained for him the respect of his lord, who eventually put him in charge of his treasury. His real vocation, however, was a spiritual one, for in his leisure hours he cultivated the life of the mystic, who seeks oneness with the Great Spirit by prayer and fasting. The retired spot which Mohammed sought for his devotions is said to be where the mosque now stands.

His fame began to spread among the people, and first he was given the popular name of Sheikh el-Mohamady; to which name was afterwards added "demer" (iron) and "dache" (stone), from the incident of his master, having observed his unwearying prayers, asking, "Are you made of iron or of stone, that you tire not in your prayers?" From the moment this story was known Mohammed was called Demer-dache. This way of naming and renaming men is still largely practised in Eastern lands.

At this point, the story being very like that of all mystics of whatever faith, the miraculous element appears in the biography of the saint.

It is related that the ruler of Egypt at this time was informed that in Medina the body of the Prophet had been stolen from the sacred tomb. Travelling to the holy city, the monarch discovered that an underground passage had indeed been bored to the grave. There was great trouble in the mind of the king and his counsellors. They were afraid of what further search might reveal, and yet they wanted to know the

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truth. The king decreed to settle the matter in this way. Let a holy man be found who does not value his earthly life. "He who will penetrate the tomb and bring me news shall win a martyr's death by forfeiting his life." No one, however, would volunteer for the dread task, till the news reached Sheikh Demerdache. He volunteered at once, with the result that he brought back from the tomb the news that the Prophet's remains were undisturbed. When the king would have ordered his death, a heavenly vision appeared to prevent him. The sheikh's life was saved, and from that time it was entirely devoted to mystical communion with God, to austere self-renunciation, and to good works—out of which grew the great Order of dervishes, which now numbers nearly five thousand men, of the influential classes, in all parts of the world.

The Order has signs and tenets which, like those of the Freemasons, are not divulged to the uninitiated, and like them it has a charitable fund for the widows and orphans of members. Prayer and devotion, and service to mankind, are the aims of those who follow the founder. The oath of initiation (as it was once divulged by a confiding member) includes the words: "I take as my sheikh and my guide unto God, my master . . . El-Demerdache." The covenant is taken by the novice (after having made the ablution as for prayer) sitting on the ground opposite the sheikh of the Order; the two clasp their right hands, covered by the sleeve of the sheikh. And the covenant embraces a humble confession of sin, and an oath of repentance, begging "the grace and forgiveness of God. . . . I am grieved for what I have done amiss, and I determine not to relapse."

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In the middle of the month previous to the annual moolid, members of the Order send in their names, from all parts of the Islamic world, as candidates for the retreat. From the moment of application no morsel of any animal food should be eaten. The sheikh calls together eleven members, as a council, with himself, to decide, out of perhaps as many as five hundred applications, who shall be the sixty-five chosen ones; age, piety, and renown for a self-denying life for others, being the chief claim to selection—the Syed el-Demerdache having the power of veto.

This year (1911) the retreat was in the Moslem month which corresponded to our August, and it was on Monday afternoon, the 14th, that the selected members arrived for it, to be first entertained, at sunset, to a royal banquet by their chief. I was told that a certain ancient Eastern dish called Kunafa was in great request, in view of the three days' fast, because of its quality of very slow digestion. This dish, which I often ate in Egypt, was invented by the chef of Munawiah, the son of Abou Soufian, the first of the Omayad caliphs (664 A.D.). Its special purpose was to stay the pangs of hunger of the Caliph during the fast of Rhamadan as long as possible. It is made of wheat-flour, produced like fine vermicelli, and is fried with a little clarified butter, and sweetened, generally with honey. It is one of the most highly appreciated of all the native dishes.

After an evening spent in prayer, the men clothe themselves in white robes, and are led to their cells, where they must stay for three days and nights, coming out only to make the noon prayer in the mosque. They must deny themselves of all sleep. To make sure of this,

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a servant of the mosque goes the round of the cells calling "La-ilaha-illal-ah!" ("There is but one God!"), and if the inmate fails of the response, "Wa-Mohammed Rasoul-oul lah!" ("Mohammed is the Prophet of God!") the cell door is opened, and the anchorite must come out to perform an ablution—surely an effective way of driving away sleep.

No word but this must be spoken to any soul during the retreat, except to say, if challenged, "There is but one God!" And the recluse must wrap himself closely in his white robe when he leaves his cell for the prayer.

The only food allowed is, in the evening, a plate of rice, cooked in oil. Coffee, however, is taken to the cells about eight times during the night, and in the morning a glass of lemonade is served.

When the time of retreat is ended, the sheikh, also dressed in white, but with a green turban, goes, with other servants of the Order, to each door to bring out the devotees; the only word spoken being "Allah! Allah!"

Together the white throng go to the mosque, where one of those great dervish zikrs is performed, in which that intense projection of the mind into what is intended for the worship and adoration of God, finds its only expression in the constant repetition of the word "Allah! Allah! Allah!" accompanied by the swaying of the head and body to the verge of total exhaustion.

These white-robed men stand in rows, their faces Kibla-wards—in Egypt Mecca is towards the East—with the saint's tomb also in front of them. Their chant begins as a low murmur; the contagion and the concentration increase almost to a frenzy, while the diapason of adoration swells into a great rugged anthem,

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

A Typical Street Scene in Cairo: Sharia Helmieh.

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with that single theme, "Allah! Allah!! Allah-u-Akhbar!!!" The cadences fall again, and rise, and finally die away.

And when the zikr is over there is another great banquet; and then these men return to the world and their daily avocations. And people of the West, to whom such ecstasy is a sealed mystery, when they hear of it, ask, as they always have asked—What does it mean to the men who take part in it? What is the spirit or the motive or the feeling behind such a manifestation?

An Egyptian friend of mine, a man of Western education, and a graduate in an English university, when I came to know him well, made a sort of confession to me, that he sometimes attended a zikr led by a sober, pious old sheikh of his acquaintance. The apologetic tone was accounted for by his knowing that I considered the whole doctrine of ecstasy highly mischievous in Islam, as in any other religion. For one thing, I think the teaching of the Prophet is against it. The idea of the mystic or recluse does not accord with the robust opposition he always showed to any sort of withdrawal from the social and public duties of life; of all things his instructions were clear that there was to be "no monkery in Islam," but each man was to have direct access to God for himself. However, it is in Egypt that stern foes of mysticism are to be found. Many prominent Moslems shared my regrets that the dervish rites should have claimed so large a share in the attentions of foreign critics, who have judged Islam by what is declared to be only a caricature of it.

"I cannot explain the matter," my graduate friend said, "but let me ask you, is it not a good thing some-

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times to detach the mind from the things of this life, in utter contemplation of the great God? I look upon an evening I spent in this way, this week, as given up to pure worship. And the sheikh with whom I spent it has great power. I wish, for one thing, that I could write for you the beautiful Arabic couplets recited at his suggestion—call it hypnotic suggestion if you like—by the lads of his 'way,' or guild, who were there. Apart from the zikr, not one of those poor boys could have commanded such language as they used, one by one, in regular order, to celebrate the praises of God!"

I learned that this sheikh would start the circle with a line of verse, and each of his disciples at the zikr would add another line, with no deviation from poetic form, and with great beauty of devotional thought.

Something must, I think, be allowed for the sensuous delight in melody which all Eastern people have, and the deep fascination they find in what seems to us like mere repetition. The excessive emotion and physical exertion together produce great enthusiasm, and a quite marvellous lucidity of intelligence, such as these lads showed. One observer of Egyptian life was inclined to think that the zikr should be classed with other lacerations of the flesh, and allowed its due share of indulgence as one of the means by which matter may be subjugated that spirit may be free. There are climes and periods that seem to stand in need of some such process, and in which mental torpidity, like the effects of soporific poison, can only be combated by such strange means as these.

I discussed the matter with the sheikh of Demerdache, who is an educated man, with an appreciation of modern and even Western ideas, and without a trace

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of intolerance, as well as with other sheikhs of different degrees and orders. I reminded the sheikh of Demerdache that Ghazzâli and other authorities had disapproved of ecstasy, suggesting that it was a possession of an evil spirit; just as Wesley in criticism of some of his own emotional auditors, who were thrown into a state of great excitement bordering on catalepsy, said, "Satan sometimes mimics the work of grace." It was the mystic poet of Islam (Rumi), I was reminded, who said—

> "Vile hypocrites steal the language of dervishes,
> In order to beguile the simple with their trickery."

Put briefly, all the dervish doings, as explained by those who approve of them, are attempts to gain a religion of the heart. They have generally been initiated by men—there have been women mystics too—who have become intoxicated with the adoration and the love of God. Some have carried ecstasy so far as to reach a sort of self-annihilation, so that they have become oblivious to pain: "forgetful of pain through absorption in God," as Rabai, the woman Sufi, stated it. They have even sought a death of self which has involved the death of all human affections.

Mysticism has revealed itself in all religions; it is perhaps due to the peculiar temperament of the Arabs and the Persians that ecstatic phenomena have been wider spread and more permanent in Islam. Describing the Arab, Herr von Kremer says he is capable of the fiercest momentary excitement, but quickly subsides into a state of complete apathy which is pain-proof. And Dr. Bilharz speaks of the astonishing anæsthesia which patients in the medical school in Cairo, where he was a professor, exhibited under the most painful

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operations; hardly uttering a sound when operated upon in the most sensitive nerve centres.

The Sufi of whom it is told that he fell into a religiously ecstatic condition and ran into a field where the newly cut stubble pierced his feet like knives, possibly felt nothing. As many of the men and lads I have known, who have taken part in dervish performances, handling red-hot irons, pushing swords through their cheeks and needles through their eyelids, and so on, have afterwards assured me was the case with themselves.

Medical science has still to determine how it is that nature can adapt itself to such perversions as the chewing and swallowing of broken glass without exacting the expected penalty. A physician of my acquaintance went to North Africa with the special idea of examining such cases, in the city of Kairouan. He was convinced that the manifestation was perfectly genuine, fraud having no part in it. He thought, as most medical men do, that an hysterical condition is produced by excitement, during which the chief dervish makes hypnotic suggestions to his subjects. That broken glass could be swallowed by a hypnotised person he thinks is easily understood, but he could not understand how it could prevent internal lacerations. He saw no sign of pain during the rites; and another doctor who has examined such cases, on the following morning could find no trace of ill effect. I have myself seen and examined the sword wounds the next day, without a sign of inflammation, and quite dry.

As for the whirling dervishes, whose zikrs some visitors are so anxious to see in Cairo, and who are now obliged to perform in a semi-private way owing

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to the discouragement of the authorities, it is claimed, by modern educated Moslems, that many of them should be ranged with "the mere froth and foam of mysticism," like "Shakers" in England and America, like the Anabaptists of Munster. There is one sect of dancing dervishes, however, which had its birth in purest mysticism, having continued for six hundred years. They were founded by the mystical poet, Rumi, who instituted the dances, which he ordered to be accompanied by the flute, to console him in the pain of separation from an exiled friend; and the head of the Order has always been a descendant of the founder. The gyrations of this Order were intended to symbolise the wheelings of the planet round their central sun, and the attraction of the creature to the Creator! In Turkey this Mevlevi sect is so powerful that the coronation of the Sultan is not considered complete until he has been girded with a sword by the head of the Order.

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CHAPTER V

"He only shall visit the Mosques of God who believeth in God and the Last Day, and is instant in prayer, and payeth alms, and feareth God only. These haply will be among the rightly guided."

Koran, Sura ix. 18.

I HAVE always been curious about the organisation of the mosques. To the Western visitor there never seem to be any signs of regular government. No names of clergy, or lists of services, appear at the doors or gates; there is never a sign of the presence of men set apart for spiritual oversight of a congregation. As in so many other things in Islam, there is a seemingly casual air about the affairs of every mosque, as the stranger sees them, which, superficially, suggests that things are allowed to manage themselves.

See this funeral procession enter the sacred building; the men bearing the bier, slipping off their shoes at the door and, hurrying across the carpet with the promiscuous little band of mourners, set the bier down before the Kibla. Do the staff of the mosque know of its appearance? Is any man of the sheikh class present to conduct the funeral prayers? Not at all! The bearers themselves are sure to know a Sura of the Koran, which they will now recite in the mosque, and almost every man who may at the moment the funeral appears be sitting or praying there, knowing how highly meritorious it is—by the Prophet's word—to

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assist with a funeral, will at once close up with the mourners and recite with them the Koranic passages. So far as there are priests in Islam—and clericalism or priestcraft, as they are known in the West, are abhorrent to its spirit—every man is a priest. The little unordered ceremony in the mosque (which may be miles from the burying-place) lasts only for a few minutes. Strangers in the mosque will relieve the bearers, and carry the bier into the street, and all the way to the cemetery casual men will quietly take a share in the sad burden, for a few yards at least. Where all are willing to help, and to people who put so little value on precision, what we call organisation seems to be unnecessary.

It is the same with the prayers. It is always a surprise to me to see how, in the greatest mosques, a vast crowd of worshippers will arrange themselves in the rows for concerted worship, so that when the Imām takes his place there will be no sign of confusion, though any person with the functions of the English sidesman or the professional beadle is quite unknown. I have seen, in the desert, a thousand men gather in small groups and range themselves for prayer without a word of direction being spoken, or the presence of any man whose office was to marshal them into the necessary precision of order.

And yet one must know that every mosque with the call to prayer resounding from its minaret five times a day, and with its necessity of at least a regular Imām to lead the Friday prayer, with its lights to be hung at nightfall, with its necessity for scrupulous cleanliness, especially of its carpet or mats, and an unfailing supply of water for the ablutions of its

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worshippers, must presuppose an organisation of some sort.

The distinguished sheikh who is the head of all the mosques of Egypt which are under the Wakfs Administration in Cairo, very kindly enlightened me on this matter. Under his control there are 1414 mosques, with 7331 "servants of the mosques."

As this office of the Wakfs plays a great and ever-increasing part in the life of Egypt, and has tremendous political significance, an explanation of its origin and functions will be of interest. It was in the year 1835 that the great Mohammed Ali created the Administration Office of the Wakfs (or charities of the pious) in Egypt, to exercise control over the immense funds which had been left for every sort of religious and charitable purpose. After various changes of its Direction, in which the Government, at times, had a part, in 1884 the Wakfs became an independent Administration, with the Khedive as its supreme Director. The Minister of Finance has, however, some sort of oversight. The immense power wielded by the Director may be gauged from the fact that the annual income is considerably over three-quarters of a million pounds; and there was in December 1910 a floating balance of £300,000. It is a power that seems to demand more political consideration on the part of Great Britain than it receives, for in it lie immense potentialities of ill as of good to the country. It is easy to understand why everything that Oriental skill can devise is done to increase its power over the people. The following list shows approximately how the money is spent:—

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	£ (Egyptian)
Subsidies to schools under the Administration	1,486
Allowances to benevolent schools and societies	16,914
Religious institutions, including the University of Al Azar ..	52,470
Kuttabs (religious schools under the direction of the Ministry of Public Instruction) ..	24,677
Salaries of mosque officials ..	65,315
Poorhouses, asylums, and orphanages	19,951
Independent poorhouses ..	1,937
Hospitals and clinics	13,073

There is no doubt that the benefits of British administration have added enormously to the income of these Wakfs, from lands and property; at the same time improved internal management has added to the resources. But Great Britain should reflect on the uses that are now being made of the wealth she has created.

In addition to the power of veto over all appointments connected with the Wakfs Administration, the unlimited power of the Director in the dispensing of the funds, even for non-religious purposes, may be gauged from the following quotation from the last official report:—

"A certain number of families, formerly in good circumstances, having fallen into poverty, place all their hope of a living in the benevolence of the Wakfs. To come to their aid and to alleviate their misfortunes, especially among the great families, His Highness the Khedive has deigned to extend to them his benevolent

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solicitude, and to them has, in his capacity as Nazir Chari (supreme head) of the charitable Wakfs, allocated to them subventions and subsidies, by which they may be enabled to provide themselves with the necessities of life. This amount in 1911 totalled £9000, divided between 339 families." Twenty-two of these families divide between them yearly £2340.

In the Wakfs Administration there are three distinct offices for the management of the mosques: (i) for the nomination and control of the officials; (ii) for the purchase of furniture and stores, and control of such matters as lighting, water, cleaning, and repairs; also taking charge of the gifts in kind destined for the use of the mosques by the faithful, such as bread, clothing, and other things for the poor; (iii) for appointment and control of inspectors, religious and secular, this department having charge of the correspondence concerning the Friday prayer of His Highness the Khedive, also the invitations to religious ceremonies in the mosques and to the great moolids.

The chief secular inspector occupies himself with the oversight of the charitable and scholastic institutions belonging to the mosques (very many of the mosques having schools attached); keeping the accounts of the new mosques which they build, and those which are put under their management; seeing to the lighting and cleanliness of these mosques. Also the inspectors have the control of the supply and distribution of the vast quantities of bread given to the ulemas, the students, and the poor, by virtue of charitable bequests.

The religious inspectors are charged with watching over the professors, preachers, and imāms (leaders

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of prayer); they prepare and decide for each mosque the list of lessons, and the hours of the course of instruction. They give advice as to the way the teacher should treat his subject, with a view to the comprehension of his public. They choose equally the subjects for the Friday sermon, and urge the preachers to deliver their homilies in a way to appeal to the heart and the mind—to be, in the words of the Wakfs last official report, "touching and instructive." They regulate the times of the Koran readings in the lecture-rooms, with regard to the convenience of the public in different places. Indeed, they control the movements of the whole staff of these sheikhs.

The officers of this last bureau admit that they have found much to remedy in the manner of appointment to the mosques, as well as in the quality of the men chosen. One reason has been the pitifully small remuneration, which in some cases has led to the absolute necessity of a sheikh, who should have been entirely free to serve the mosque, having to seek employment elsewhere to gain his sustenance, to the neglect of his religious duties. Under the new régime a large sum of money has been devoted to the remedy of this fault.

Mosques—the sheikh explained to me—are of two kinds. The proper mosque, what we should call perhaps the cathedral, which is used for the five daily prayers, the Friday noon prayer, and the two great Feast Prayers, which are performed at the end of the Fast of Rhamadan and at the Moslem New Year. And the zawia, or little mosque, like, say, a parish church, which is prepared only for the ordinary daily prayers.

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The big mosque is prepared for the prayers by the furniture which distinguishes it :—

A pulpit.
A sura chair, from which the Koran is recited.
A raised stone platform (in the very large mosques) in which a sheikh, who can see the Imām at the Kibla, follows his leading of the prayers so that he can be seen by the whole congregation, many of whom could not possibly see the Imām.

In the early days of Islam, no town had more than one mosque, to which all the inhabitants resorted. Many primitive communities keep to this rule to this day. At Omdurman one marvels to see the extent of the floor of the mosque where the Mahdi and his successor led the prayers of many thousands of people at one time. In time, with the growth of population in the towns, and especially the development of sects (the difference in which was mostly in small matters of ritual) mosques were multiplied. As riches increased, and the Prophet's wishes against luxury were forgotten, wealth was lavished on the mosques, and rich men embellished them with costly furnishings, especially with carpets and mats and beautiful lanterns. A mud floor, a primitive roof which did not keep out the rain, the stump of a tree for a tribune, these fulfilled the requirements of the great Prophet, who declared that no money is more wasted than that put into ostentatious building.

The pulpit was raised a step or two in Mohammed's day, so that he might be seen by all when preaching. It has been further gradually raised—against the Caliph Omar's wishes, however—until the present number of

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eight steps was agreed upon. The sura chair was, of course, unknown in the early days when the Koran was recited from the floor of the mosque : the chair developed with the elaboration of binding and decoration of the copies of the Koran, which made the book of such great size that a support was necessary for it. This support came to be raised about four feet from the floor, and so continues.

It was in discussing this question of the early simplicity of Islam with another gentle old sheikh, who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, that he deplored to me the loss of the ideals of the Prophet's day, which had made it possible for men to lavish useless wealth, even on the tomb of the Prophet himself.

"While education, and the care of suffering mankind, is neglected in the sacred cities," he said, "there is in the chamber at Medina, in which Mohammed was buried, a diamond of the estimated value of over £50,000, which was presented by the Sultan Ahmed Khan I.; and many other gifts of the sort—some to the Kaaba at Mecca—worth millions of pounds sterling. This is contrary to the wishes of the great man buried there, or of his first successors, who knew his wishes, from having lived and worked with him. Omar hated all display, especially in pretentious buildings. He would not allow a balcony to be made to the new houses built in Egypt, as it encouraged spying, a thing greatly hated by Arab people; he commanded that all buildings everywhere were to be lowly and simple, and he compelled one of his chief generals, Saad, to pull down the gateway he had built before his palace. If Omar had had his way there never would have been a pulpit in the mosques to 'set the preacher higher than the congregation.'

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"It fills me with sadness to see the vulgarity of display which now possesses the Moslem people. To have a grand wedding, or a funeral, and 'appear big' to their neighbours, many Moslems, especially in towns like Cairo, will spend large sums of money, sometimes getting into debt for the purpose. And all the time we lag behind modern civilisation in our neglect of public service and organised good works. There is, however, a small band of men who have joined together in a pledge to resist extravagant public display.

"When my own wife died," he continued, "I agreed with my only child, my daughter, that our beloved should be carried to the grave with the utmost simplicity, and that we would ignore the costly custom of erecting a booth, with elaborate illumination, outside the house, and the engaging of famous Koran readers. We did everything we could to pay respect to the dead, and to observe the necessary commands of our religion, so far as they did not lead to a great outlay. The consequence was that we saved nearly £100, which we gave to educate a poor girl; and I believe there is a growing number of people who will be willing to do the same if only we can arouse something of that 'public spirit' which is such a noble feature of English life."

The Prophet always led the prayers of his people, and preached on Fridays, his example so far being followed that for generations one of the chief duties of the caliphs was to do the same. Many sermons of Mohammed, of Abu Bakr, of Omar, Othman, Ali, and other leaders of early Islam, are preserved; simple moral discourses, calling men to truth and justice, brotherly love and equity, industry for success in this world, with watchfulness over the claims of eternity.

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God gave you this world that you might aspire to the next; He did not give it you to foster avariciousness in you. This world will pass, but the next is everlasting. Do not let this transitory life so fascinate you that you become careless of that which is eternal. Be not of those who "purchase this present life at the expense of that which is to come: their torment shall not be lightened, neither shall they be helped" (Sura ii. 80). Your conclusion is with God the Almighty. Obey Him; and in obeying Him you will have the shelter of His power.

When the caliphs and princes of Islam no longer preached to the people, but paid imāms were engaged for the office, the sermon became formal, and then was strictly limited to set phrases. It is this that a committee in Cairo is working to reform.

It is still held that the Caliph, the Sultan, or other chief ruler of Islam, is responsible for the sermon on Friday, through his own words, or those of his appointed agents. Following this ruling, the Wakfs Administration must always get the sanction of His Highness the Khedive, who is the religious ruler and the leader of prayer, for the preachers they appoint; and I believe it is entirely within the power of the Khedive to give or withhold permission to any mosque to hold the Friday prayer. One of the powers of the Wakfs Administration enables them to threaten that, unless certain conditions which they lay down are observed, the Khedivial order will be withheld—*l'ordonnance Khédiviale permettant d'y célébrer la prière du Vendredi*, as the Wakfs report puts it. A Sheikh El-Islam a few years since defined this power, which virtually makes the Khedive, as the representative of the Caliph in

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Egypt, master of the Church, as follows: "The accomplishment of certain religious ceremonies, such as the prayers on Friday and at Bairam, is subordinated to the will of the Caliph, since the arrangement of ceremonies for Islam is one of his sacred attributes. Obedience to his orders is one of the most important religious duties. As to our mission (he was speaking of the duties of the religious class), it consists in administering, in his name, the religious affairs which he deigns to confide to us."

A second committee, meeting in Cairo, watches over the work of the servants of the mosque, and, as it is formed of authoritative men, discipline is exerted through its decisions.

The sheikh very kindly prepared for me some brief figures, giving the cost of maintenance of the largest and of the smallest mosques in Egypt. I thought this would show in a nutshell the way the work of maintaining the mosques is accomplished.

Annual Expenses of the Largest Mosque

The most expensive mosque in Egypt is that of Mohammed Ali, in the Citadel, in Cairo, and the annual outlay for it is as follows:—

	£ (Egyptian)	Milliemes
Salaries of the different servants, sixty-five in number ..	1515	840
Electric light	46	320
Water	13	680
Bread	75	..
Meat	40	..
Candles	89	..
Straw	2	400
Perfumery	1	200

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	£ (Egyptian)	Milliemes
Mats	92	850
Brooms and washing cloths ..	1	840
Sundries	2	400

The carpets had been renewed this year at a cost of £2139.

(A millième is of the value of a farthing.)

For some time the Wakfs Administration supplied the carpets only to this mosque and to those important mosques, like Hosein, which commemorate the family of the Prophet, but they now help many others in this way. Each year they now buy from 2500 to 3000 metres of carpet; their experience having shown them that the carpets of the East wear much better than those of Europe. I certainly know of nothing that looks more hideously incongruous than a Brussels carpet in a mosque.

The smallest mosque is that of Al Sada Al Arbaein, at Saliba, Cairo, which costs only £4 (Egyptian) 200 millièmes annually, and has one servant.

Where does all the money for the "upkeep" of the mosques come from? The collecting of money from worshippers inside the mosque is absolutely forbidden, and, indeed, is unknown. The distraction a "collection" would be from the worship of God is unthinkable to the Moslem mind. The only service at which it is permissible at all is when the two great feast prayers are performed in the open air, as they often are in country places, when, just before separating, gifts for the poor are collected.

The money for the support of many mosques comes from subscriptions privately contributed by great

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families, who maintain them; or, as in the case of the great number under the Wakfs Administration in Egypt, from the immense charities of Islam left by the pious for this and kindred purposes.

There are a great number of mosques not under the Wakfs Administration, and over which there is no sort of official authority. The way in which these mosques are governed and preserved gives a perfect illustration of that combined realty and elusiveness of the spirit of Islam which the practical West, with its devotion to exact rule and order, tries, almost in vain, to understand. I give the account of the particular mosque of one of the villages in which I stayed, almost exactly in the words of a friend, who modestly refrains from any mention of the fact that his is the rich family which in this case delights to guard the honour of the House of Prayer.

If the mosque is built by the rich man of the village he makes himself responsible for everything connected with the repair of the fabric, and he will buy new carpets or mats and other furnishings when needed. If he dies it will always be the pride of his family to carry on his work. There is no compulsion anywhere: if there should be any failure on the part of the family, the people of the village would unite, in an informal way, to keep their mosque in order. The simplicity of such a mosque is dear to the worshippers, who wish to follow the example of the Prophet in this particular.

Is there no committee, with a secretary, to see that the work is done regularly?—a question natural to my Western mind. Who sees to the paying of the servants, and punishes negligence of duty? The call to prayer, for instance, how important it must be to have a regular and conscientious muezzin!

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In name there is no committee, but it is understood, in most cases, that the cadi of the village will see to the proper carrying out of the duties, himself taking the part of the Imām, and sometimes of the muezzin, as well. In no case are these duties in such a mosque degraded by mercenary consideration, and never as a sole means of earning a living.

The Imām is, of course, the leader of prayer; the muezzin is he who calls to prayer from the minaret at the proper stated times—no slight undertaking when it is remembered that he must make the first call each day before the sun has risen. In Egypt the sun rises early in winter, and the mornings are sometimes bitterly cold, inducing, one would think, to neglect of such a duty as that of the muezzin.

Nearly every village has devout men who spend most of their time in the mosque, reading the Koran and other books of devotion; these will delight to perform the duties of muezzin and Imām, without failure or neglect. Those worshippers who have means will entrust to such holy men certain contributions to buy oil or candles, and even to buy the simple bread for their own sustenance, when they are, as is sometimes the case, penniless, or nearly so.

The sheikh of Tanta kindly gave me details of the organisation and finances of the very ancient great school mosque over which he reigns with such wise and kindly intelligence. The yearly expenditure is £10,000, paid now through the National Wakfs, and from alms given direct to the sheikh. Up to the year 1908 the mosque was a separate institution ruled by the ulemas, but the Khedive then placed it under the Wakfs Administration. The sheikh is appointed by the Khedive, but may only be chosen from the body of the High Ulema of Egypt,

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of whom there are always thirty—the appointment of High Ulema being for life, with a salary of £240 yearly.

In Tanta Mosque there is a sheikh, a sub-sheikh, an inspector, three controllers, ten men in minor posts, and nearly one hundred professors. The salary of the sheikh is £45 monthly, the sub-sheikh £25, the inspector £10, and the professors, and minor employees, take between £10 and £5 each monthly.

The power of the sheikh of a school mosque is like that of a rector in a college. These chief country mosques of Egypt, which are at Tanta, Alexandria, Dessouk, and Damietta, are all allied to Al Azar University. Over them all there is a superior Board of Sheikhs, presided over by the Sheikh Al-Azar, including all the heads of the school mosques, with some of the ulema of the Cairo University, this Board making all the rules, which are carried out at each school by the sheikh and a committee.

As for the students, they are drawn from all classes of society. Strange to say, although the Tanta school, like the others, is open to all the Moslem world, this year the students are all pure Egyptians. Possibly the lads who come from afar prefer to study at Al Azar itself in the capital. The only qualification for admittance is to be under seventeen years of age, in good health, and with a knowledge of the Koran. The education is free, and the students in the lower classes are given two or three loaves of bread every day, while the senior students take five loaves a day—they are about the size of a Yorkshire tea-cake. There is accommodation for those students who are too poor to pay for lodgings in the town.

The teaching at Tanta consists of "all branches of Moslem theology, and the practice of religion, all

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branches of the Arabic language, the history of the Prophet, and the accredited Traditions, penmanship, mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, logic and metaphysics, algebra, drawing, history, geography, physics, natural history, also something about public health, and laws and administration." I quote exactly from the sheikh's words for this curriculum, which he admits has been enlarged and reformed of late years.

In answer to my question as to what are the aims and ambitions of such large numbers of students (there are 13,000 of them in the schools I have mentioned as allied to Al Azar) the sheikh replied, "Some come for the love of study—but not many—others to qualify as sheikhs to preach or teach in the mosques, or in the schools, some to become cadis, or judges, in Moslem law; while a great number come for usual education, their intention being to follow the careers of their fathers, in professions, in commerce, agriculture, or as gentlemen of leisure, being the sons of men who prefer for their sons a religious or Koranic education to the modern teaching of the Government schools—they belong, indeed, to the sheikh class of the turban and robe, rather than to the effendi class of European language and dress, who too often, alas! lose their own religion, and do not adopt yours."

I may conclude this chapter with one of the "free and reformed" sermons preached in Cairo while I was there. I omit the usual preface of the profession of faith in the one God, and the praise of the Prophet.

"The Holy Koran says, and herein is the duty of man, 'Worship none but God, and be good to your parents and kindred, and to orphans and to the poor, and speak with men what is true, and pay the stated alms' (Sura ii. 77). Praise be to Allah, who rewards those who

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fulfil their obligations and keep their trust. Allah, the most true of all tellers, said—Be faithful to your pledges and do not break your promises, for these make you responsible to God. Be sure God knows what you do; and when He destined you as the best of all peoples, He commanded you to do good and forsake evil. The foundation of true belief is faithfulness in the performance of every undertaking. A nation which lacks this quality, and allows itself to become familiar with lying, will be misguided, and all its striving will be in vain. Suffering, misery, and poverty will overtake it, and in the next world punishment more severe and lasting. O creatures of God! I call you to the practice of the truth, and faithfulness in every trust. Is there no reward even in this world for this?—To be believed by one's friends, when one speaks, to be trusted in all the affairs of life? Such was the example and life of our great predecessors, who were before all things faithful, and true to themselves, and to one another. But, alas! we have forfeited the great teachings of our religion, that stand now as a remonstrance against us. The Prophet—on whom be blessings and peace—as you know, hated lying, and he declared, 'There is no belief in the unfaithful, nor a religion to the untrustful.'"

"Shun ye the word of falsehood," says the Koran (Sura xxii. 31). Mohammed declared that the guardian angel moved away from a man in detestation when he told a lie. By the testimony of all men who knew him Mohammed was a truthful man. "We have ever found thee a speaker of the truth," they admitted, even in the days before they accepted his message.

The only office allowed to the religious teacher is

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advice, guidance, and warning. Just as the layman will only with extreme reluctance refer to the faults of a brother Moslem, so even the preacher must not venture to expose the follies and frailties of others; and to pry into the religious beliefs of other Moslems is not permitted even to the chief sheikhs. It is not proper to make any outer show of repentance; sin can only be confessed to God alone and in the secret heart. Of all these things, God will judge; and every function of priestcraft is opposed to the spirit of Islam.

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BOOK III

GREAT FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

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CHAPTER I

" Proclaim among the people a Pilgrimage: let them come on foot and on every fleet camel, coming by every deep defile to be present at its benefit . . . let them pay their vows, and circuit the ancient Kaaba (the site of which God assigned to Abraham). . . . This do. And they who perform the rites of God should perform an action which proceedeth from piety of heart." *Koran*, Sura xxii. 27–33.

One of the greatest events of the year in Egypt is the starting of the Holy Carpet for Mecca. As regularly as the month of fasting comes to a joyful end in the Bairam Feast, the populace begin to look forward to the festival of the Mahmal, as not only marking the time of the setting off of the pilgrims to the Holy City, but as an event of great moment to all men religiously inclined, especially to the poor who have few hopes of making the journey themselves.

To thoroughly know a subject it is said a man must write a book about it. I verily believe there is not a man living who can give an intelligible account of the Mahmal of Egypt, who has not either written a book about it, or assisted in the writing of one; and then, most of the accounts are wrong.

For a whole month I clung to the Holy Carpet, as no Moslem has had the opportunity of doing, in a determined attempt to fathom its mysteries; and during that time I only found two men who had anything like a clear knowledge of its origin and significance, its manufacture and its finances, its use and destination. One was the Bey of the Carpet, the gentleman who is appointed by the Government to the charge of it, from

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the weaving of the first thread, to its final departure, and who has even escorted the sacred burden no less then eight times to the very Kaaba in Mecca itself. The other gentleman was Mohammed Labib Bey Al-Batanouni, who accompanied H.H. the Khedive of Egypt on his Pilgrimage, in the year 1908, as historian of what was regarded as a national event.

As I had the great advantage of the full assistance of both these authorities, with the added privilege of penetrating into the precincts of the house where the Carpet is made by the hereditary craftsmen—the first outsider to cross that guarded threshold—I feel justified in giving an account of what I learned and saw; with the thought—if I might venture on this without offence—of dedicating the record to the Moslems of Cairo themselves, who have so far taken the Holy Carpet for granted that they have never sought for the full explanation of it. A surprising fact, if one did not know the East, when one learns that the cost of the Pilgrimage Caravan of the Egyptian Mahmal is no less than £50,000 a year, mostly borne by the State, including the gifts sent to Arabia with it.

My first interest was whetted by the permission, given after very natural delays and hesitations, to visit the place where what is called the Carpet is woven every year, and where the Mahmal and the beautiful door coverings and other sacred decorations are embroidered. The place where the work is done is an ancient Arab house—once a minor royal palace—with the usual stern outside walls, but opening under an arched gateway into the square courtyard, which at once gives light and space and air to the house to contradict the impression of the narrow, crooked street.

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The palace, now known as the Khurunfish, was set apart for the making of the Carpet by Mohammed Ali early last century.

The Bey received us at the gate with courteous welcome; our credentials were such that he could promise to show us every detail of his work, although our presence was a unique event, admission being denied even to Moslem people.

"This is a Government place," he said, "but it is kept under separate rules, and is not accessible as other Government offices are." I turned to listen to the melodious voice of a sheikh reading the Koran in a balcony overlooking the courtyard. "Ours is the only place under Government where the Holy Koran is read. This place is as sacred as a mosque during the time of prayer."

We were taken at once to a long room to see the spinning looms, where the raw yellow silk is prepared before being dyed. Next we saw the actual weaving of the Carpet—how it ever came by such a name could not be imagined when one has seen it. In reality, of course, it is the outer cover of the Kaaba, and the name "Carpet" is never applied to it by any but Europeans, who persist in so naming it; and what is curious, at the same time think that the Mahmal, which is a camel palanquin, really goes to Mecca with a carpet inside it, and brings it back to Cairo. There is no return of any carpet to Cairo. Tourists who think they are seeing the Holy Carpet's return see only the Mahmal, coming back, as it went, quite empty.

It would be better to speak of "holy curtains," of which there are eight used in the complete covering of the Kaaba. Moslems describe the whole cover as the Kiswa,

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meaning "robe" or "habit." The old man, Hadj Ahmed el-Seidy, who has worked for fifty years at this place, having succeeded his fathers in a task which is hereditary to his family, explained to us the weaving, of which he and his son alone hold the secret. His is, of course, a sacred office held by the family of Seidy; the hereditary transmission of pursuits and customs is a tenacious habit of the Arab people from remotest times. It is this that gives to their genealogies and their traditions so much credence.

The curtains are black, and the art of making them consists of weaving the Koran texts into the material, also in black, with an effect like that of damask, the lettering, which is large, being in the decorative Arabic. The watered-silk effect of the lettering is most striking, and in certain lights, when the cover is hung upon the Kaaba, it can be read at a considerable distance. The sentence woven all over the cover is the Islamic profession of faith—"There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

The length of the curtains—we were allowed to handle them quite freely—is about fifteen metres, and the breadth of each of the eight parts nearly five metres, a metre being, of course, thirty-nine and one-third inches. Two of the curtains together make the cover to each side of the Kaaba. They are tied together by strings, which are sewn on by pious hands, after the Carpet has been taken to the Mosque of Hosein, in Cairo, which sewing I also saw there, and have already described.

The old Hadj did not at first take kindly to my presence, and the intentness of my interest in his sacred work; but he soon thawed, and then became genial, and

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even enthusiastic, as he explained the details, and showed to me all the beautiful trappings, the tassels worked of gold, and other elaborate embroideries which go to Mecca at the same time as the cover. He has been to the Holy City very many times, as he superintends the hanging and adjustment of the cover there, details of which work he explained to me. It is necessary to tie the cover very securely to the Kaaba, as the winds in Mecca are uncertain, and come suddenly from all directions. It is Buckhardt who has a poetical passage bearing so exactly on this very point of the hanging of the cover. "The black colour of the Kiswa, covering a large cube in the midst of a vast square, gives to the Kaaba at first sight a very singular and imposing appearance. As it is not fastened down tightly, the slightest breeze causes it to move in slow undulations, which are hailed with prayers by the congregation assembled around the building as a sign of the presence of its guardian angels, whose wings by their motion are supposed to be the cause of the waving of the covering. Seventy thousand angels have the Kaaba in their holy care, and are ordered to transport it to Paradise when the trumpet of the last judgment shall be sounded." Being woven of cotton and silk, the weight of the material causes the curtains to hang firmly.

A few years ago, the Hadj told me, it was thought that the old hand-weaving of the Cover could be superseded by machinery. A very costly loom was brought from Manchester; but he did not like it, and so went back to the ancient process, the secret of which his father had taught him. The inscription woven into the stuff, it is his great pride to know, is in the most beautiful form of Arabic writing, "as, of course, it must be," he

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added, "for to weave the cover for Holy Kaaba, the centre of the immense world of Islam, the object on which every Moslem hopes his eyes may rest at least once before he dies, and before which he may pray, is the greatest of earthly honours."

Before I left him, the old man was willing even to be photographed, being encouraged thereto by the Bey.

It was extremely interesting to be able to see and handle the famous band which encircles the Kaaba, a little above the middle, and which has been described by all travellers who have seen it, and is so conspicuous in all photographs of the chief place of prayer to the whole Moslem world. This magnificent belt is about two and a half feet deep; it is of the same material as the cover, with what is called the Throne verse, from the Koran, heavily embroidered on it in gold—"God! there is no God but He; the Living, the Eternal: nor slumber seizeth Him nor sleep; His whatsoever is in the Heavens, and whatsoever is in the Earth. . . . His Throne reacheth over the Heavens and the Earth, and the upholding of both burdeneth Him not; and He is the High, the Great" (Sura ii. 256). It is edged in silver embroidery, the corners of the border being appliquéd with green silk, also ornamented with silver embroidery.

The hangings, both for the outside and the inside of the doors of the Kaaba, are splendid examples of the art of embroidery in gold and silver, with panels of green and pink satin on the groundwork of black, with embroidered writing in addition to the conventional designs. Burton says that the curtain which covers the outside of the door into the Kaaba is called "Kaaba's face veil," and that this signifies the Church visible as

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a virgin or bride, an idea which has found its way into the poetry of the East, the Kaaba being termed "Mecca's bride." The "holy of holies" is guarded by eunuchs as though it were the abode of a fair bride. I found, however, no confirmation of this.

Another highly decorated cover which I saw is for the door of the great pulpit of the Kaaba square—called the Haram—very similar in colouring and design. I saw the two valuable copper jugs which are sent each year, filled with purest rose-water, for the washing of the Kaaba. I also examined the embroidered bag for the key of the Kaaba, which the Bey of the Carpet carries in the Cairo procession, when the Holy Curtain first sets out on its journey. His, too, is a hereditary office, and he showed me with pride the magnificent trappings of his horse, which are used on ceremonial occasions.

In a separate room we are shown the very beautiful covering for the tomb of Ibrahim, to which an old man is adding the last loving touches. This cover is carried in the Holy Carpet procession, set upon a frame exactly the size and shape of the tomb, and is mistaken for a second Mahmal, not alone by the Europeans, but by the great majority of the Moslems, so secretly are these provisions for the religious observances and customs of the Pilgrimage carried out, and so little does the Eastern mind ever burden itself with any care of exact information. The groundwork of the embroidery here again is black, the raised embroidery is in gold and silver, the panelling being of green and rose-pink satin, with Koranic writings in gold. Round the bottom is a silk fringe of scarlet and yellow, over a flounce of green satin. The tassels at the corners are of gold, as are

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the medallions which are put on at the corner where the cover joins. The beauty of the embroidery, both in the Arabic writing and the conventional designs, is seen in my photographs.

It is a pious act to supply covers of this sort for the tarkeebeh of saints, as well as to repair the domed tombs in which they stand; a friend of mine, at his own charge, keeps such a tomb in good repair, and renews the cover, of a saint buried in his native village, although the sheikh's claims to remembrance have been entirely lost —the only instance I met of such traditional knowledge having slipped from the Arab memory.

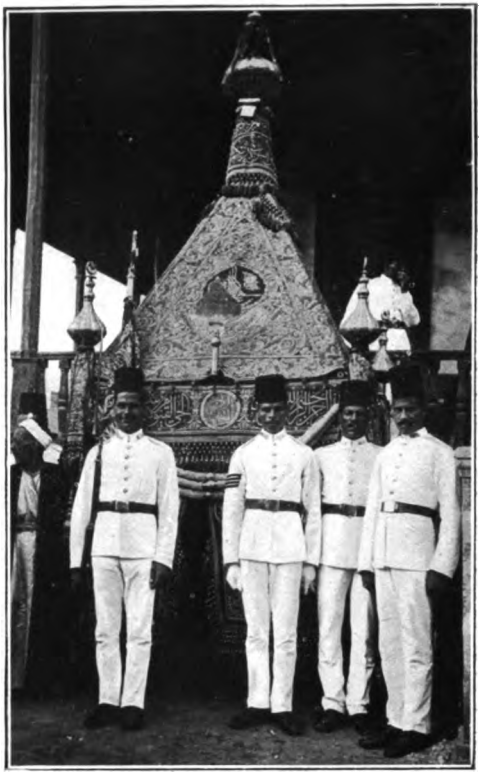
That the taking of all these sacred objects connected with the Carpet to Arabia is in itself a considerable undertaking, was brought home to us by seeing the tents and the waterskins and other requirements for the long journey. I am told that the staff of the Egyptian commission do an admirable work each year, in Mecca, for the pilgrims of all nations, in the matter of sanitation, by the improved methods and appliances which they are able to demonstrate.

We now went into the courtyard, and the two very fine camels—in a way held sacred too—which are kept here solely for the purpose of conveying the Mahmal to Mecca, were brought out for us. They are of great size, and of the cream colour which distinguishes the finer breed of camels. The younger camel is kept in reserve, owing to the great age of the beast which has been to Mecca for a vast number of years, and is doubtless the most famous animal in the whole of the Islamic world. These animals live a secluded but luxurious life within these precincts. By the credulous populace all sorts of miraculous signs mark them out in the first

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THE GORGEOUSLY EMBROIDERED COVER FOR THE TOMB OF IBRAHIM AT MECCA.



THE MAHMAL IN CAIRO, GUARDED BY EGYPTIAN TROOPS.

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instance for selection to their sacred task, and afterwards attend their journeyings.

There are seventy men employed in this place, and to mark the special nature of their work each has a robe of cream colour with a small pattern in old gold, all hand woven, and so strong that the Bey declared they would wear for fifty years. These robes are worn for the procession when the Mahmal and the curtains go before the Khedive, so that the actual workers may be recognised. Two or three of the men now put on their robes, and I was able to photograph them. No man is employed who is not a pious Moslem, regularly observing all the prayers.

Before leaving, the Bey told me that the yearly expenses of the work under his charge amount to £4550. The cost of the silver and gold thread alone is £515.

It will be noticed that all this time we have seen nothing of the Mahmal itself, that palanquin about which so many fables have been woven—the most credulous and misleading by European writers. I think, indeed, the Mahmal might be termed the puzzle of Egypt; even Lane professed that he did not know why it was regarded with such reverence by the Moslem people. We have seen the sacred camel on whose back the Mahmal travels; but where is the palanquin itself, and what is the true part it fills in the Pilgrimage? The sacred camels have nothing whatever to do with taking the Carpet, just as the Mahmal has no connection with the Carpet. For one thing, the immense weight of the Kaaba coverings makes the suggestion that one camel could carry them, even without the heavy Mahmal itself, quite ludicrous.

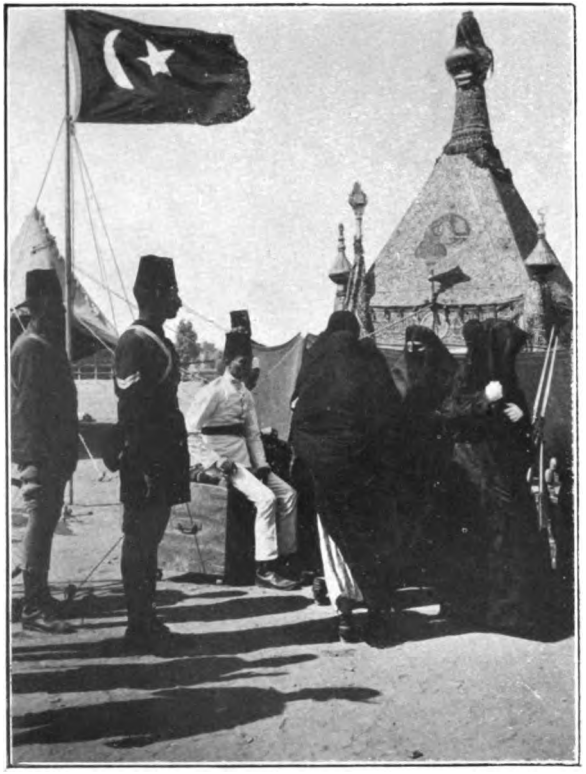
At the present moment the Mahmal is, I learn, in

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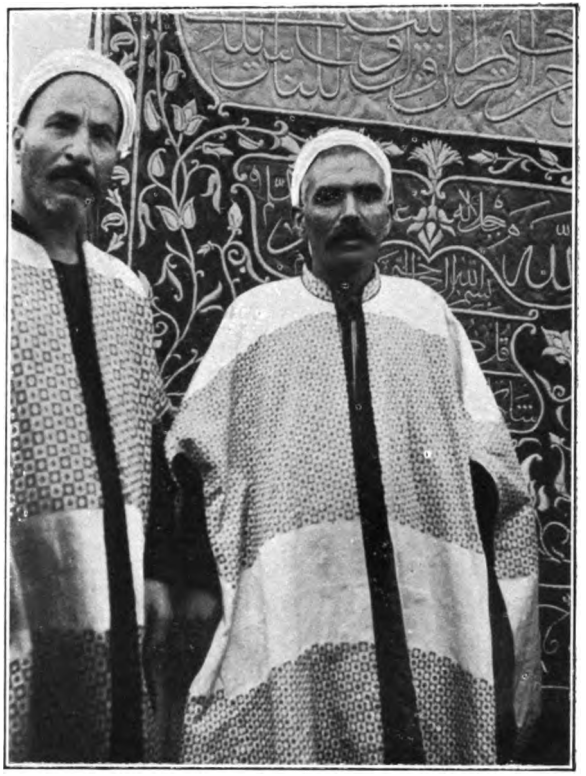
the care of the Minister of Finance, at his official residence in Cairo. It is impossible to see it there; but as I am so interested, an invitation is promised me to a celebration which takes place in the building under the Citadel on the night before the Kaaba hangings and the Mahmal start for Mecca. There the Mahmal will be shown, and, more interesting still, there will be set up an exact model of the Kaaba, with all the curtains hung as they will appear in the Holy City.

There is no religious celebration in Cairo more impressive and beautiful than this festival, held on the eve of the setting out of the Mahmal's Pilgrimage to Mecca. There are other great public occasions, when the Oriental splendour of illumination breaks out, to thrill the thronging populace, and the out-of-door excitements of the fair are linked with the claims of pious significance. But this official fête in the pavilions at the foot of the Citadel combines in equal proportions a sense of the sacred office with that of subdued entertainment, a feeling of religious awe being curiously mingled with that of rejoicing. Not that Oriental splendour is lacking; indeed, the scene that burst upon our vision, when our carriage had driven to the door of the Citadel building, along a long avenue of special street lamps, placed only a yard or two apart, was dazzling in its beauty. The thousands of candles and electric lights, in an endless vista, as one looked through the whole range of halls and tented pavilions, with the sparkling lustres of the almost solid mass of chandeliers, shone down upon the picturesqueness of an Eastern gathering—enriched by the vivid colouring and the gold embroideries of all the draperies I had seen in the making, which in this light gained a thousand-

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EGYPTIAN WOMEN VISITING THE MAHMAL AT ABBASIEH.



WORKERS OF THE HOLY CARPET IN THEIR DISTINCTIVE ROBE.

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fold in beauty. The blackness of the Kaaba cover, hung round the first room, through which shot now and then the graceful Arabic so cunningly buried in its sable depths, only served to accentuate the bright beauty of the other hangings.

On entering, Eastern politeness of course necessitated that we should first drink coffee, with the choice, however, of the peculiar hot drink called Kirfa, drunk only at religious ceremonies, and at weddings, while large trays of sweetmeats were handed round.

By this time the Bey has heard of our arrival, and comes to greet us, and escort us through the rooms. He is naturally most proud of the Kaaba room, arranged in the exact proportions, so that the covering and the door curtain hang just as they will hang at Mecca.

From this we pass to a gorgeous pavilion, one of those huge tents, the walls decorated with the brilliantly coloured appliqué work in Arabesque design, with verses from the Koran, so much used in Egypt for all ceremonial occasions. Here the lighting is almost overpoweringly brilliant, from the myriads of candles in their lustre setting.

The covering of the Prophet Ibrahim's tomb was set up here, and received much attention; but the real centre which drew every Moslem man and child was the Mahmal, now to be seen in public for the first time since its return from last year's pilgrimage. Round the Mahmal men crowded; they stroked a fringe of it, always with the right hand, of course (for the left hand is reserved for dishonourable acts), and then to imbibe the blessing immediately stroked their faces, while they muttered a prayer. Little children were held up that they might repeat the parent's act.

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As we stood near the Mahmal we could see seated on the floor at a short distance, in a double row, about twenty-four men of the sheikh class, facing each other, with two large candelabra standing at each end, between the rows, chanting praises of the Prophet, and reciting Traditions of him. At a certain point they came to an end of chanting; all hands went up to the breast, upraised, as a sign of silent petition. Then they all got up, gathered round the Mahmal, sang another short chant in praise of Mohammed, and again raised the hands to the breast in petition, all the people imitating them.

Occasionally there came a man who prayed with more than usual intentness, and seemed as if he could not tear himself away from the Mahmal; clinging gently to it as though he longed to absorb something from it into his being: the "guardian" of the sacred palanquin would quietly urge him away, and others less devout would take his place, content perhaps with a touch.

These manifestations recalled to my mind a passage in one of Lady Duff Gordon's letters: "My servant Omar's eyes were full of tears, and his voice shaking with emotion, as he pointed out the Mahmal to me—in the procession. Moslem piety is so unlike what Europeans think it is, so full of tender emotions, so much more sentimental than we imagine—and it is wonderfully strong. I used to hear Omar praying outside my door while I was so ill, 'Oh, God, make her better. Oh, my God, let her sleep,' as naturally as we should say, 'I hope she'll have a good night.'"

The Mahmal is, in its material aspect, just a camel palanquin, or the covered seat for fixing on the back of the animal, in which a lady could ride without being

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seen. The present cover is handsomely embroidered in gold, on a dark red ground; it has finely chased silver ornaments on the top, and at each corner, and heavy cords of gold festooned round each side. Having now been to Mecca many times, the gold work of the Mahmal cover is becoming a little dull. Every twenty years it is renewed, at a cost of £1500, the ambition of those responsible for renewing it being to always improve on the last cover. Though never used as a palanquin, the inside is still made with seats, for a lady and her servants. Possibly four people could ride in it, but they would have close quarters.

And why is it so intensely revered? To begin its history at the end, there is no doubt that the reason for this deep reverence is that the Mahmal goes to Mecca every year exactly as a pilgrim goes, visits every spot that the devout pilgrim visits, and returns (alone of all these gorgeous furnishings sent out) to the capital of the country it represents. Lane heard a soldier exclaim, as the Mahmal passed him, "Oh, my Lord! Thou hast denied my performing the Pilgrimage!" In those words lies the secret of this reverence.

I can never forget a scene near the Mahmal at Abbassieh, where the Pilgrimage is eventually organised for its actual start to Mecca. A number of poor women, whose accent told that they had come the long journey from Upper Egypt above Luxor, were sitting in a close group on the ground, as near to the Mahmal as possible, singing very sweetly a song of the Pilgrimage. The Lord had denied them to pray in Mecca, but they were not left altogether desolate, for their eyes were rejoiced to see the blessed Mahmal. For this they had come specially those many miles, the only journey they could

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afford in all their lives, and their constantly reiterated prayer was that God would grant them some of the merits of the Pilgrimage itself.

The Mahmal dates from the thirteenth century (the year 645 of the Hijrah), when the first Mahmal was made by order of the Queen Shargaret El-Dorr, to serve for the Pilgrimage which she intended to make. The Queen's name signifies "a tree hung with jewels," and the Mahmal is sometimes called by this name. In the following year she sent the empty palanquin, as a symbol of Egypt, and in memory of her own pilgrimage, and from this the annual custom grew up, to be followed by other countries, who take the occasion, as Egypt does, to send with their Mahmal the national tributes of money and food to the Holy City, and for the service of the Kaaba. The Court historian told me that he thought the custom of sending a State symbol was older than the Queen's Mahmal, a special camel, termed the Mahmal, being sent with presents to Holy Kaaba even in pre-Islamic days. The Prophet himself sent such a Mahmal from Medina to Mecca with presents.

Many Mahmals are mentioned in history—from Mesopotamia, from Yemen, from India, the Mahmal of Ibn Rashed, and many others, some of which continue to be sent to this day. In his history of the Sudan, Naoun Bey Shakir says: "The country of Alfour was absolutely independent, paying no tribute to anyone, save to the two sacred mosques (in Mecca and Medina) to which it used to send an annual Mahmal and a purse. The Mahmal used to pass through Egypt, with a caravan carrying feathers and gum and other products of the Sudan, which were sold, the proceeds being put in the purse. Then the Mahmal travelled to the

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Holy Land (Arabia) in company with the Egyptian pilgrims."

At first the Egyptian Mahmal actually contained the presents, but after the Queen's visit, the sovereign of Egypt enriched it with decorations to such an extent that it was impossible for the camel to do more than carry the Mahmal itself. Its present weight is about fourteen kantars; and the presents are now entirely carried by other camels. A kantar is nearly a hundred pounds.

After it finally leaves Cairo, the Mahmal is protected by a special green cloth cover, which is renewed every year, as it is left in Arabia as a cover to the tomb of Seidy Zounes El-Seidy. At Mecca the Mahmal is placed between the "door of the Prophet" and the "door of Peace," in its green cover, which is only removed for ceremonies.

The romantic days of brigandage still survive even the railway which is now nearing Mecca. A distinguished pilgrim tells me that at present when the Mahmal leaves Mecca it is taken by Sultani Al-Farai—or the eastern road; or by sea from Yidda to Zembo, and from thence to Medina. Or it may join the railway, going from Al Wajh to Abdul Aula Station, and on to Medina by train. This route has been made necessary by the formidable brigands who infest the roads between Mecca and Zembo, and threaten to rob the Caravan of the Carpet unless they are paid large sums of money.

The Mahmal is received at Medina with splendid ceremony, and is first put in the mosque near the pulpit, and then placed near the tomb of Fatma, the Prophet's daughter, and the wife of Ali. The Ameer Hadj, and other servants, must first put on special robes, consisting of turban, a gown, and white belt of cloth, before carrying

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the Mahmal from the mosque to the chamber of Fatma's tomb. Its connection with the Queen would make it unfitting to place the Mahmal near the tomb of the Prophet, and his male friends, according to Moslem ideas of propriety. It is not allowed that people outside the relationship in which intercourse is possible in life, should pay visits after death—for the visits to the tombs are always referred to as actual attendance upon the departed. "On Friday I go to see my child," said a father to me, referring to a visit to the house of his family in the cemetery at Cairo; and my Egyptian friends could never understand why I did not regularly visit an English friend whom they knew had died, and was buried at Helwan. "Does *no one* go to see him?" they asked quite pitifully.

The Mahmal leaves Medina with a magnificent farewell demonstration, returning then to Egypt, where it is received with the native rejoicing of a general holiday, and a salute of twenty-one guns. As "the return of the Holy Carpet"—in no way to be compared with the interest of the procession on its setting out three months earlier—the Mahmal procession is one of the favourite sights to foreign visitors to Cairo; when, by the Islamic calendar, the date allows it to fall in the winter season. This year (1912) the ceremony was on the 6th of January; the next occasion will fall on the 27th of December this year; and so on, each year losing between eleven and twelve days, through the calendar being under lunar ruling instead of that of the sun.

It thus takes thirty-three years and a half to bring the beginning of the Islamic year to the same date as that of the Christian year, the Moslems having lost a year in that time. The actual month of the Pilgrimage is Zu'l'-

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heggeh ; but the Carpet starts from Cairo in the month of Showwal. The month begins on the night that the new moon is first actually seen ; a rule that leads to much confusion and doubt in the fixing of engagements. Last year (1911) in Egypt it was quite pitiful to see the suspense of the poor people as to when the month of fasting —Rhamadan—would end. And not the poor alone—the Khedive's official receptions at his palace at Alexandria were fixed to begin on the morning of Saturday, 30th September, to inaugurate the feast which celebrates the close of Rhamadan. But as the new moon, which Europeans take for granted, was not actually seen until about three o'clock in the afternoon, the reception could not be held until the next day; and neither poor nor rich might eat on that anxious Saturday till the welcome gun sounded the joyful news that a new moon was in sight. It was the astronomers at Constantinople who had seen it, and telegraphed the news.

The following details of yearly payments made in connection with the sending of the Mahmal and the holy coverings, by the Minister of Finance of Egypt, were prepared for me :—

To the Ameer El-Hadj of this Pilgrimage for salaries of himself and assistants	£1282
To Arab employees in the service of the Pilgrimage	2511
For the salaries of the Sherifs of Mecca and Medina	1493
For the Egyptian almshouses for poor pilgrims (takieh) at Mecca ..	1961
For the takieh at Medina	1657
For the benefit of the people of Mecca and Medina	2879

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For the poor of Mecca and Medina, from various charities, as well as from the Egyptian Government	£3000
For wheat, given annually at Mecca and Medina, and cost of distribution	22,500
Candles and torches, for the two harams, and sacred mosques	1629
For the carrying of the sacred burdens, by camels, by land and by sea ..	4278
For tents and water-skins	155

In addition to which there are payments made by the public wakfs (charities), and private bequests, as well as by the private wakfs of the Khedive, amounting to large sums, which are applied to various expenses of the Pilgrimage of the Mahmal, to the necessities of the poor pilgrims from Egypt, and of others, at Mecca, and the upkeep of the holy tombs and mosques there; the total amount making no less than £50,000, as Egypt's contribution to the Pilgrimage, and to the benefit of the holy cities.

Enormous as this sum seems, a comparison with the records of the times of the Fatimides will show that double that sum was spent in this way. In those days the cost of the Caravan and its gifts was £120,000, of which sum £10,000 was spent on perfumeries, sweets, and candles; £40,000 went to the expenses of the delegates of Egypt; the remaining £60,000, in the words of Makrezi, who wrote a history of the Pilgrimage Caravan — "constitute the expenses of protection, charities, camels, wages, troops, the Captain of the Caravan, other employees, the digging of wells, etc. In the days of the Vizier Bazouri, however, the expenses

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were greatly increased, and amounted to £200,000, the highest sum in all the history of the Mahmal."

Up to the time of the Mamelukes, the Mahmal constituted a very important feature in the Egyptian state. The Ameer El-Hahj occupied the office third in rank in the state, and became, by virtue of his office, Governor of Cairo. It was a permanent post, and carried great influence in the Hejaz, so that he often discharged and appointed the Ameers of Mecca. The old rulers so exaggerated the importance and sacredness of the Mahmal, that they ordered every high functionary, through whose locality it passed, to kiss the foot of the camel bearing it; until Sultan Gakmak prohibited what had become a custom in the fifteenth century.

The celebrations connected with the Mahmal gave the Khedive Ismail another opportunity for the wild extravagance which brought such ruin upon his country. One item in his lavish expenditure was to have huge vessels set up in Cairo in which sugar was melted, so that the people might drink freely of the syrup for three days—this being a revival of an old custom at times of rejoicing. In those days there was a separate post for "the keeper of sweets," but an employee is now charged in his place with the distribution of charity amongst certain poor of Arabia.

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CHAPTER II

"Beats there a heart within that breast of thine,
Then compass reverently the sacred shrine:
For the essential Kaaba is the heart,
And no proud pile of perishable art."
Jalaluddin Rumi, *Lines on the Pilgrimage to Mecca.*

It has been seen that the Mahmal does in some degree eclipse the Holy Carpet. During the night following the celebration at the Citadel all the hangings are taken down. The next morning there is a great procession, when the Holy Carpet is taken from the Citadel to the mosque of Hosein. Last year (1911) the procession was on 7th October. On this occasion, too, it is the Mahmal, or its special banners, which the people chiefly attempt to caress, although they lose no opportunity of rubbing their right hands over the Holy Carpet, and of lifting their children to do so.

For the purpose of this procession, the different lengths of the Kaaba covering are stretched over wooden frames, which, being carried by a number of men, look rather like a succession of giants' biers, covered with black palls. The separate lengths of the Kaaba band are also placed lengthways on frames; and these frames, gleaming with gold, and the gorgeously coloured and embroidered cover for Ibrahim's tomb, set on the back of a beautiful camel, like a palanquin, and then the rich old gold of the Mahmal itself, redeem the procession from a sombreness ill according with an occasion of rejoicing.

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For nothing could give more pleasure to the Cairo crowd than this procession of the setting out on the Pilgrimage does; to them, if it has a sobering note at all, it is that it means farewell to some relative starting on a journey, which still has many perils. But the Egyptian is a child of to-day, whose sustenance is hope. Like a child, he has no yesterdays and no to-morrows. At all times his faith tells him "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." And the Pilgrimage is, after all, one of the sure paths to Paradise.

And, for the happy moment, here are waving banners, in the warm sunshine, and holy sheikhs of all the different guilds of the mosques, and the bands—one of them of Scottish bagpipes—playing with blissful iteration the one tune that contains every note of music, always in a minor key, that has any value to the native folk.

The whole of the Cairo garrison of Egyptian troops, including all the artillery, footmen, and cavalry, with a special honorary guard of the Mahmal, take part in the ceremonies connected with it. The Ameer Al-Mahmal, who is appointed annually by the Khedive, takes the lead, and is followed by the military pashas.

After the camel, on which the Mahmal has now been fixed, has carried it in its annual rotations of the square of the Citadel, it is led up to the stand where the Khedive—or in his absence the Prime Minister—accompanied by the high functionaries of the State, the ministers, the great ulemas, and the notable men of Egypt, await it.

The Mamour of the Holy Carpet then comes forward, with the rein of the camel in his hand, which he gives to the Khedive, who reverently kisses it, and hands it to the Ameer Al-Hadj, who afterwards leads the

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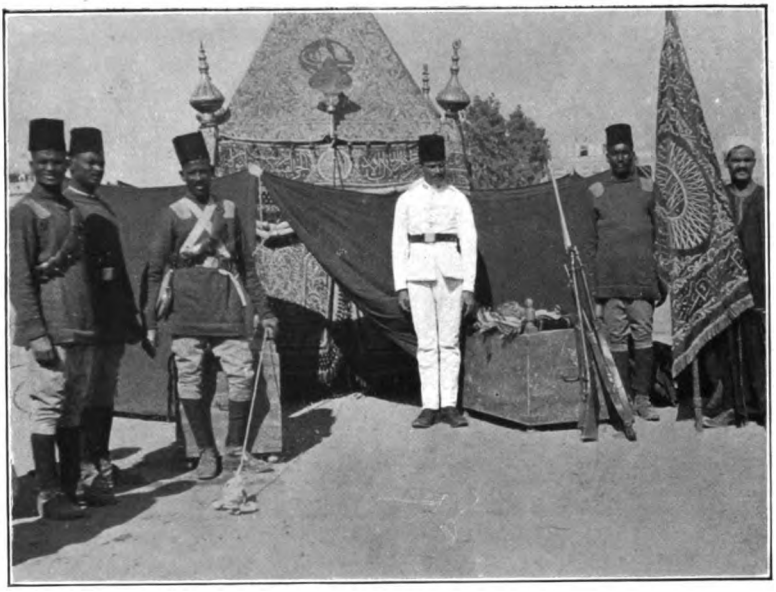
camel. The guns of the Citadel are fired, and the procession starts for the plain—called the Mahjar—at Abbassieh (the Kaaba covering being left *en route* at the mosque of Hosein for the sewing which I have described), passing through the Al Darb Al Ahmar, the Gate Zoueilah, Ghuria, Nahhasin, and Bab-el-Nasr.

At Abbassieh there is a considerable encampment of tents for the servants and troops who are to go with the Mahmal to Mecca; and here the Mahmal halts for two or three days, and is visited by many people. All the provisions and ammunition are gathered here for the start. A special train is drawn up on the railway, and the Mahmal with its large deputation starts for Suez; from thence it goes to Yidda, and then by the land route to Mecca.

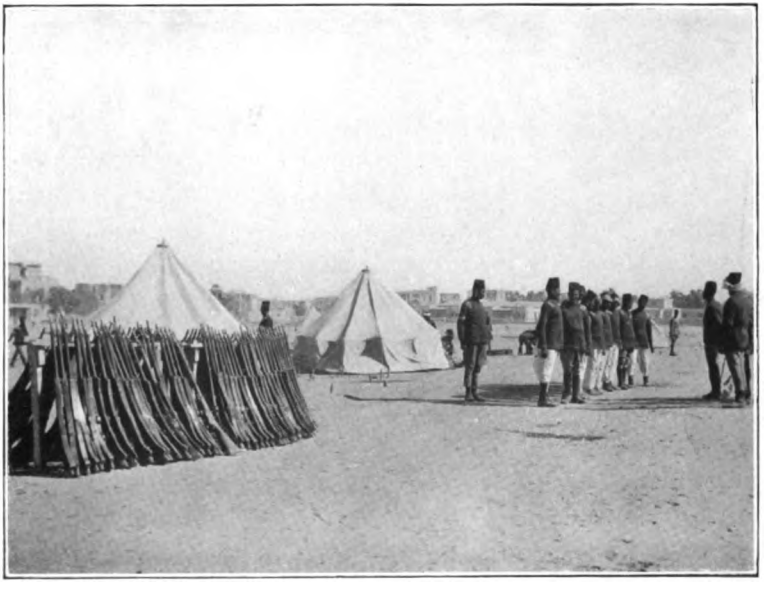
In November, 1910, the Mahmal left Egypt by way of Alexandria, attended by the Khedive; from thence it went by boat to Jaffa, and from Jaffa to Medina by train, by way of the remarkable new Hejaz railway; the use of which railway, as it draws near to the Holy City of Medina, is exclusively reserved for Moslems, being closely guarded and scrutinised by soldiers.

In the old days, before reformers like the Sheikh Mohammed Abdu arose, to denounce the excesses and extravagances of Moslem celebrations, the buffoon and the dervish magician had a part in this procession, and the religious devotee, and the mystic, made strange and weird demonstrations; but that has gone. The old man, bare to the waist, who, with twistings and contortions, rode a camel, going to Mecca on this Pilgrimage for years innumerable—and never speaking a single word to any man on the journey—until he became to

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THE MAHMAL IN THE CAMP AT ABBASIEH, NEAR CAIRO,



AND THE CAMP OF THE MAHMAL.

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the simple crowds what seemed a permanent institution, he too has disappeared.

But still, neither the buffoon nor the magician is altogether extinct, for amateurs in these professions give us entertainment in the street while we are waiting for the procession, and again after it has passed: both of them very crude performers, too well paid even by the millieme (the fifth part of a penny) of the poor fellah from the country. The only skill the conjurer showed was in drawing from the pockets of myself and my friends—I had a seat in a palace gateway in one of the narrow streets—more money than he was likely to earn by his other tricks of magic in a week.

When the Holy Carpet arrives at Mecca it is handed to Sheikh Sheiby, in the presence of the chief ulemas and notables, and kept by him till the day of sacrifice, when it is hung upon the Kaaba. None of these holy drapings, we have seen, come back to Egypt, but when they have fulfilled their purpose they become the property of the Sherif of Mecca, being sold to pilgrims in special shops near the Kaaba. Rich people buy the beautiful door covers, and portions of the Kaaba band, and have them framed to hang in the tomb houses; in most of the apartments of the royal tombs in Cairo, such souvenirs of Mecca are to be seen. The poor are contented with a shred of the black covering; and, if they can afford it, they buy also Mecca water in sealed blue bottles from the Holy Well of Zemzem, in the Kaaba, for their last earthly washing—or to present to a poor friend on their return—and a piece of linen made in Mecca, and washed, too, in the holy water, for the garment in which (as they will specify in their wills) they are to be buried. They also drink, with

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great emotion, a small draught of it; it is of brackish taste.

This well is on the east side of the Kaaba, in the mosque enclosure called the haram, and is covered with a small building and cupola. Moslems are persuaded that it is the very spring that gushed out for the relief of Ishmael when Hagar wandered with him in the desert (Gen. xxi. 19). The historian to the Egyptian court assured me that it is only people like the Sudanese, and some Indians, who dip their shrouds in its waters; but I knew an educated man in Algeria who had done this.

The making of a cover for the Kaaba goes back to the time of Ignorance—before Mohammed—the first cover being made of skin, and afterwards of cloth; and all the tribes of Arabia at first took a share in paying for it. At the time of the Prophet it had become the duty of the Quraish, or chief tribe, who had care of the Kaaba, to cover it, and they used Yemen cloth. It was in the time of the Abbaside Chaliphate that the sovereigns of Yemen and Egypt began to share the duty of providing the covering. Under the Ottoman rule, Egypt alone began to work the cover every year.

It is not in my plan to give any history of the Kaaba itself, but as I had the advantage of drawing on the lifelong studies of the Khedive's historian of the Pilgrimage, it will, I think, be interesting to record, not so much the history as the views of a modern Moslem of culture, on this sacred shrine, towards which over two hundred and fifty millions of living souls turn every day in prayer.

The Pilgrimage was an immemorial custom of the Arab race; and the Kaaba was the one thing a scattered

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people, broken up into tribal warfare, had in common, as a shrine at which alone they could feel even the slightest impulse towards a national feeling.

For twenty-five centuries before Islam, they had gone to the Kaaba because they believed it was the House of Allah. The tribes were of different creeds, but no special creed claimed the Kaaba, and they were united there in a belief that it belonged to the ruler of the whole universe. Here they kept the many idols they worshipped. Mohammed Labib Bey told me that there is a big stone at the outer door of the Mecca haram, used as a step. The people of Mecca believe that it was one of the idols which Mohammed turned out of the Kaaba; they call it Assaf.

There was no trace that the Black Stone which is built into the side of the Kaaba was ever worshipped (it will be remembered that the Moslem historian is speaking) although revered so deeply. It has always been believed that it descended from heaven; many people who have seen it think it is of meteoric origin.

The Moslems are not alone in venerating historic stones, as Labib Bey points out. Jacob set up a stone as a memorial. To pass over many other instances, the King of England is always crowned over the stone, kept in Westminster Abbey, about which many fables are told to carry its origin back to very early times.

The Black Stone which Abraham erected in the Kaaba at Mecca was either put there in obedience to God's command, as a sign of the reverence to be paid to His house, or as a sign of Abraham's own and his son's pledge to make that place sacred to all men. It is probable that a black stone was chosen so that it might be easily distinguished. The stone was respected by

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Abraham and his son, and by their descendants, the Arabs, and then by all Moslems up to the present moment.

I give here the Bey's exact words on this important point, as the Black Stone is much reverted to by critical writers on Islam. "The very earthly centre of the religion itself is a sacred Black Stone," says the Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner in *The Reproach of Islam*. In a more recent book, written by a man who is physically a great traveller, but seems to have little faculty to know the strange people amongst whom he finds himself, Dr. Karl Kumm goes so far as to declare that "the superlative of heathenism is Islam, in which the devotee five times a day bows to the dust in the direction of his temple, the Kaaba, and the holiest of it, the Black Stone which fell from heaven."

The European writers, who, pretending to be Moslems, have gone to Mecca, have greatly misled the world by declaring that Moslems worship the Black Stone, thus preserving some part of the idolatry of the pre-Islamic times. My reply to these is, that on the occasion when the Prophet adopted the Pilgrimage as one of the pillars of his new religion—so wisely recognising its value in the work of drawing the Arab people together in national aspirations—he stood near the Black Stone and said, "I know thou art a stone, that can do neither good nor evil," and then kissed it. When Abu Bakr made his first pilgrimage, as Mohammed's successor, he, too, stood by the Black Stone and said, "I know thou art a stone, that can do neither good nor evil; had I not seen the Prophet—may God give him peace—kiss thee, I would not have kissed thee." The stone is a symbol to the Moslem people, just as a national flag

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is a symbol; it is reverenced in much the same way.

The importance of the Pilgrimage as a great bond of spiritual inspiration has scarcely been realised by most writers. There are from 60,000 to 90,000 pilgrims to Mecca every year. Its influence over the lives of those who perform it is often so great that it gives a new direction to character; in every generation men and women have been roused from spiritual lethargy to become missionaries and leaders of Islam in all parts of the world by the experiences they have undergone in their Holy Land.

This is a fact very difficult for the Western mind to understand; I think because, in the Western, or Aryan mind, such spiritual impulses are generally started by means of Preaching; but because, in the Mission of the Meccan Pilgrimage, preaching has little part, we Europeans fail, perhaps, to realise the secret of the hold it gains over the minds of men. It is the power of Prayer, however, that moves the Semitic mind. When the Moslem who is devout enough to make the Pilgrimage first finds himself one of the great body of worshippers in the sacred court of the Kaaba, where he believes himself to be specially near to his God, Who is well pleased with his situation; and later on praying in the "Prophet's Mosque" at Medina, or standing by that holy spot where Mohammed and his friends are buried, he seems to enter into an intense realisation of all that his religion means to him. It is not surprising that then, in a glow of zeal, he wants all men to know of the secret which has led him to a higher plane of experience, where earthly things fall into their proper relationship, and

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clear vistas open for him towards a Paradise which is rich with rewards for those who keep the doctrine and do the will of God.

When we find, in every page of the history of Islam, how the men who have visited Mecca return to their own countries to stimulate, as reformers and missionaries, the religion of their neighbours, and in some cases to gain great success in converting whole neighbouring tribes from idolatry and barbarism, we may well pause to ask what would happen if Mecca, under some possible revival, became a really great and potent centre of a reformed Islam, sending men away to all the ends of the earth, with even greater enthusiasm, to "strive in the path of God."

Western critics have often missed the true significance of the Pilgrimage in their unsympathetic attitude towards its outward observances, failing to realise that there must be a deep spiritual meaning in these things to account for their permanent hold over the mind and heart of so many millions during such a long period of time.

As a thoughtful Moslem put it to me: "It is strange that Western writers seldom allow that our Pilgrimage can be anything but an outward form, gone through as one of the 'pillars' of our religion, with the object merely of gaining merit hereafter. As a matter of fact, the very setting out for Mecca is a sign of strong faith in God and His promises. Thousands of the pilgrims set out with very little provision for the journey, and the sufferings they endure are incredible. The minds of most of the pilgrims are thrilled with intense spiritual fervour by their experiences; they feel that they have come into more intimate relation with their God, and

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also with their fellow-men. They meet and have intercourse with the best men of their religion from all parts of the world, exchanging views, and receiving new impressions of personal character.

The principle of the equality of all men is here instilled very deeply into the mind, by the fact that every pilgrim dons exactly the same garment—and that of the plainest sort—and all personal habits and adornments are set aside by which men are differentiated in the social scale. Even the distinguishing turban is put off for the time, and the head remains bare, so that every mark of race and tribe is forgotten. By the same token, men are cured of pride and self-assertiveness; they realise as never before that "the faithful are brothers" (Sura, xlix. 10), and that before God there is no respect of persons.

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CHAPTER III

"I bid you fear God openly and in secret, guard against excess in eating, drinking and speech; keep aloof from evil companionship; be diligent in fasts and self-renunciation and bear wrongs patiently. The best man is he who helps his fellow-men, and the best speech is a brief one, which leads to knowledge. Praise be to God alone."

The teaching of Jalaluddin, a Moslem saint, whose tomb at Iconium is a centre of pilgrimage.

In no religion is the memory of the lives of saints more cherished than in Islam. The passionate devotion to the memory of the Prophet—"on whom be blessings and peace"—is intimate and personal to every one of his followers. One has only to see the rapt attention that is paid to a recitation of his sayings, or the stories of his life, and the heartfelt chorus of approval with which every sentence is punctuated, to realise this.

It is the same in lesser degree with the minor saints. The memory of the most humble life is treasured; the memorial dome is set up, and the people visit the place of burial to commune with the departed, to be reminded of his goodness or his wisdom, to pray to God to place to the saint's account certain merits of theirs, hoping that they may gain favour from the man who is nearer than they are to the Throne of Grace.

One of the early philosophers of Islam (Avicenna) being questioned on the subject of visiting the tombs of the dead, and praying for the departed, put the matter in this way. All creation, whose parts are linked together, is subject to influences which all derive from a single source—God. Terrestrial souls differ widely in

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rank; the highest are endowed with gifts of prophecy, and perfected so far that they attain the sphere of pure intelligence. A soul of this kind entering after death into eternal beatitude, shared with its peers, continues along with them to exercise a certain influence on terrestrial souls.

The object of prayer for the dead, and visiting their tombs, is to beg for the help of those pure souls, a help which is realised sometimes in a material, sometimes in a spiritual way. The material help may be compared with the direction which the body receives from the brain; spiritual assistance is realised by the purification of the mind from every thought but that of God.

These tombs vary in size and beauty, from the gorgeous mosque tombs in Cairo, such as that of the Imām Shaffey, to the poor little ragged enclosure in the desert, only marked by a few white flags on frail poles, and guarded by a recluse, who in some cases lives his frugal life literally in a philosopher's tub. These guardians of tombs are very often themselves mystics and saints, reflecting on the merits of the men whose resting-places they care for, whose descendants they sometimes are; and leading lives devoted to prayer and religious reading and contemplation, they tend to become like them.

Next to the house in which I stayed in Cairo was the tomb, standing in a little garden, of the Sheikh Maghraby —lovingly guarded by an old man who was much esteemed by a few people to whom his quiet and frugal life was known, full of gentle wisdom, coming from religious study and a chastened experience of the poor value of any earthly life which is not centred upon the life to come.

Few of the many European passers-by guessed what

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was the nature of the little domed building or of the existence of such a man. They wondered, perhaps, to see the native Egyptian, or the Berberine, turn as he passed the tomb to mutter a prayer or recite a verse of the Koran, with eyes intent upon the covered sarcophagus—called the tarkeebeh or táboot—to be seen through the railings and the half-opened door; while some were attracted by the brightness of the flowers in the little city garden. But beyond that the tomb occasioned no thought.

All the time, however, the old man tends the spot that is dearer to him than life; he talks with the saint whose memory he lives only to keep green; he preserves the tomb in spotless cleanliness, quietly asking of his neighbour the little oil necessary to keep the lamp burning, giving a rich return to his Christian benefactor from the flowers of the sacred garden.

Once a year, however, a great commotion of Oriental rejoicing breaks in upon this quiet life. It is the moolid, or birthday, of the saint, when all his admirers gather to celebrate, with crude music, feasting, and religious exercises, chief of which are the recalling of the good deeds and sayings of the departed sheikh.

It is only in the Eastern mind that the capacity exists to passionately identify itself with the lives of its departed heroes, so as not only to venerate their good deeds, and to repeat their wise words, but to suffer over again their sorrows, and to realise their joys.

Imagine, for instance, a city like Cairo, in which only a very few years since, for a whole day each year, certain of the native inhabitants refused to quench their thirst, and where, if a water-carrier had dared to appear in their streets, he would have been killed; and this because, as long ago as the seventh century, a popular hero had been

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massacred on that day, by enemies who had denied him drink!

And to this day, if you would see native Cairo revert to a fearful phase of Oriental medievalism, you must see the bloody celebration of this same hero's martyrdom, which takes place at night in the main streets leading from the famous quarter of the bazaars—where a few hours before the unsuspicious tourist has quietly pursued the bargaining quest of Eastern treasures.

It was on the last day of December that I went, entirely against the wishes and advice, I admit, of my more cultured Moslem friends, to witness the procession on the day of Ashoora, in memory of the death of Hosein and Hassan. The subterfuges and deceits practised upon Europeans to trick them out of seeing this procession are so persistent and ingenious, that it becomes a matter of self-respect to outwit them. But in many ways the subterfuges succeed. This year not one of the European newspapers gave the right date of Ashoora; last year friends of mine went to the Mousky a day too late; this year I was on the point of setting out a day too soon. It became obvious, later on, that the reporters never arrived at all, for their much-belated accounts bore evidence of mere gossip.

"The tenth day of Moharram" seems explicit enough; but remember that there is the moon to reckon with, as to which *is* the first day; then your informant must know what day of the Western month coincides; and then there is the puzzling Eastern custom of reckoning each evening as belonging to the day following it, and not as we do, to the close of the day; for instance, the procession this year was on our Sunday evening, 31st December. To the Egyptians this was Monday evening.

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Add to all this an intention to confuse, and it is not surprising that the European often finds that he has been successfully misled.

Through the teeming and brilliantly lighted streets, which gave evidence that I had tracked the right evening, I made my way, with a native escort, to an Arab inn near the Mosque of Hosein, where I had previously sent to engage a room overlooking the street. As this inn is well known to the ladies of rich Moslem families, as having a side entrance away from the crowded streets, the proprietor was very averse to letting one of his rooms to any person whatever of the male sex. If I had been any but an Englishman—the confidence of Eastern ladies that Englishmen will treat them with courteous reserve is, as I know, universal—he would have declined altogether, as his patronesses would have deserted him. On the express condition that, if I brought Egyptian friends, I would see that they would go straight to my room and refrain from afterwards moving about in the passages where they might meet the native ladies, he consented to reserve for me a room. This celebration has always been regarded by Egyptian women as particularly their own.

Allowing for Eastern vagueness in all matters of fixing times, as well as seasons, and knowing that I should enjoy the sight of the gathering crowds, and also to make sure the procession did not after all escape me, I started out at six o'clock, although, as I surmised, the celebration would not begin till about nine.

It was worth while to be in time, however, for there is nothing so interesting and picturesque in the world as a purely Eastern crowd *en fête*, especially at night, under the glowing lights they love, when

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every man and boy of them is detached from all considerations but those of good-humoured enjoyment for himself and his friends.

To-night everyone is eating a special Ashoora cake, and there is much almsgiving in the names of Hassan and Hosein. The cafés are crowded with men who have specially engaged chairs, and who also order coffee to cheer the waiting hours, as the rule of abstinence on this day is no longer observed except by Persians.

It is not easy to remember in these gay streets that this is known as a day of mourning and of agony for a hero's sufferings and death. A day which in Persia still is given up to the keenest realisation of that heart-breaking tragedy which has always had power to move the Eastern spirit. Of the Persian Miracle play, a writer who saw it said: "Only in the Passion play which Ober-Ammergau has made famous can a parallel be found to this Oriental witchery; and even then with far greater skill and preparation, and a more artistic setting, the audience seems cold and indifferent to the Saviour's griefs by contrast with the tear-stained faces of these broken-hearted Easterns, who bewail with dust-defiled head and heaving breast, smitten with passionate hands, the martyrdom of their hero."

It is obvious that the Egyptian Moslems do not take the matter of the martyrdom very greatly to heart. It is the Persians in Cairo who arrange the procession which this great crowd has come out to see; it is the Persians here who have credit for spending the day as a solemn fast, for to them every other consideration of Ashoora is outweighed by the memory that Hosein, son of Ali, grandson of the Prophet—the true line of the sacred Caliphate, which other men have violated—was

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cruelly slain, with his little sons, at the battle of the Plain of Karbala. It is in the fact that Hosein married one of the daughters of the last monarch of the Sāsānid dynasty that we must look for the explanation of this passionate devotion to the memory of Hosein, and his sons, and the hold this martyrdom has always had over the Persian people. They saw in the descendants of this union the heirs of their ancient kings, and the inheritors of their national traditions.

To every Moslem, however, of whatever sect, this is a great day, which must not be ignored. For even in pre-Islamic times Ashoora was a sacred day; the first meeting of Adam and Eve took place on it, after they were cast out of Paradise; it is the day on which Noah went out of the Ark! The Nubian lad who waits on me at table has prepared for its advent by sending, weeks ago, to his family away up the Nile every sort of household provision; he believes, as all Moslems do, that traditional saying of the Prophet: "Whoso giveth plenty to his household on the day of Ashoora, Allah will bestow bounty upon him for the rest of the year."

I wish I could paint that Oriental scene as I saw it from the hotel window. Every shop had been turned into a place for the reception of guests, and not a seat was vacant. The red tarboosh, and turban of the Al Azar student, and all the various robes of sheikh and merchant, and the blue galabieh of the wondering fellaheen who had come in from the country far and near, sobered by the modern ugliness of the dress of the effendi; the extra lights, and the beautiful lanterns—made of white linen with Arabic lettering appliquéd in scarlet—hung across the roads; with police and soldiers mounted and on foot gradually marshalling the moving

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throngs into line; the growing tenseness of interest, which, however, never broke through the prevailing good humour: all this made a living picture, vivid and unique.

By nine o'clock the police, by fair means or foul—the ignorant Oriental recruit dressed in a city uniform is a terrible and most loquacious martinet—had cleared the road and made a rigid *cordon* at the edge of the pavements.

Some time after nine, amid intense murmuring excitement, the procession appeared. First a sort of sober detached deputation of Persian men, headed by the Consul. I could not help a little cynical amusement to see, taking a leading part in this group, a Persian dignitary who, when I pressed him to gain for me admission to the house from which the procession, after preliminary ceremonies (and sacrifices, too, I believe), starts, said, "With the utmost pleasure, I would help you if I could; but I do not approve of this exhibition, and have nothing whatever to do with it!" The Persian house is so closely guarded on this occasion that I heard the British agent had wished to be present, and had been refused an invitation. My Moslem secretary, however, was given a card of admission, as the most that could be done for me!

Then came a number of boys, many of them carrying fine old wrought-iron braziers filled with flaring fuel, the effect of which added greatly to the picturesqueness of the scene.

Now there come into view a number of men, with uncovered heads, wild looking, and with blood spattered on their white garments, some lashing their bare backs across the shoulders with chains, while others smite

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savagely their naked breasts, the flesh being raw and inflamed with the punishment they are inflicting upon themselves. All the time they cry in a sort of subdued frenzy, "Hassan! Hosein! Bey!" over and over again. With them were three or four men, apparently of the more intelligent class, who seemed to exercise some authority and control, calling out to them when to cease the beatings, and making a casual examination of their lacerated flesh, then ordering them to lay on again.

This part of the performance, I thought, was perfectly genuine and free from artifice; the men lashed themselves with real and terrible vigour. My Egyptian friends, who were with me, decided that the men of this group were true Persians, and that it was from a sincere realisation of the sufferings of the martyrs they put themselves to such torture.

On a small Arab horse now comes a little boy, of about six or seven years, with his black hair shaved back from the front half of his head. His forehead was swollen and congested; in the middle of it were two rough-looking cuts, and what looked like blood, which had flowed from them, appeared to have run down his face. He carried in his hand a small sword, held upright with the blade towards his face, and we were meant to suppose that he had made the wounds himself. There were red spots all down the front of his white garment, as though of blood, and also red spatterings on the white cover of the horse. I never saw him move the sword, and as far as his expression went, the child seemed to be taking a dreamy detached interest in the show, as though he were merely an onlooker, and certainly he betrayed no sign of pain or distress, either for himself or for the martyr Hosein.

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A few more men came, beating their breasts, and then another child on horseback, perhaps a little older than the first, looking very like him, but with more blood on his face and clothes. It occurred to me that if all the red splashes on the horse's cover were blood from this child's wounds, he could not have sat upright as he did, his eyes bright with interest in what was going on. Like the first child he held his sword rigid, and I never saw him touch the two horrid wounds on his swollen forehead, although I thought there could be no doubt of the blood trickling down his face; a man walking by his side turned the blood aside from the child's eyes with a napkin, the boy placidly submitting. Both boys looked to me as though they might have been mildly drugged. They were both children of beautiful and refined features, their part being, of course, to represent the children of Hosein, who were killed at the same time as their father.

Now appeared the most gruesome and revolting part of the procession. Two long rows of men, walking sideways, facing each other, with their backs to the pavement, came along, with wild cries, dancing and swaying from right to left, while every few seconds they did actually cut their horribly swollen foreheads with the swords they carried upright in their hands.

"Hassan! Hosein! Bey!" they reiterated, excited thereto by several men who passed up and down between them, and while they gave orders, wiped the streaming blood from the faces of the victims.

It was not the actual performance that was so revolting as the very low criminal type of man who was engaged in it. With their heads bare, and the long streaks of hair on the crowns which the very poor sometimes

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instruct the barber to spare from his razor, waving about in their horrible sort of frenzied monkey dance, these poor wretches looked like a set of mad villains, partly drunk and partly stupefied; or, from the way they hesitated in their task, and then went on again when ordered, their manner suggested some sort of hypnotism.

"Hashish!" I heard one of my Egyptian friends whisper behind me, and turning, I saw how sickened and revolted my friends were. "This is not Islam," they said; "it is shameful that it should be allowed. The Sheikh Mohammed Abdu"—the name that rises to every reformer's lip in Egypt—"would have stopped everything of this sort long since, if for mean reasons he had not been opposed in high places."

What lent a further air of unreality to the thing was that the white garments of these men were covered, from the shoulders to the feet, with what was meant to look like fresh dripped blood. The very overdoing of this detail made it obvious that the gore had been applied as a theatrical effect.

The explanation of the sword-cutting, which my friends gave, was justified by everything I saw. These performers are not Persians at all, but low-class persons, of no matter what race, to be found in the slums of Cairo; possibly hashish-smokers, who are known to be willing to submit to this ordeal for the sake of a handsome fee and the accompanying perquisites. Their foreheads are treated the day before in such a way as to make the flesh swollen and congested, so that the cutting is really a relief, and looks more terrible, from the amount of the suffused blood flowing from it than it really is. The men who excite and urge the poor

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wretches in the procession *are* Persians; but the performers themselves, so far as any feeling for the martyrs goes, care nothing but for their reward.

The whole performance seemed like a relic of a sterner and more barbaric time, made doubly horrible by the loss of the sentiment, and the genuine passion, which once inspired it. Whether the Persians keep alive in Egypt, by this means, some remnant of the real feeling which actuates their countrymen to inflict genuine suffering upon themselves, as they think over the agonies and death of their saint and hero, I could not determine.

At the representation of the Passion play of Hassan and Hosein in Persia, the audiences are so worked up with the passion of grief and pity for the martyrs that they do actually and very severely gash themselves with knives. Often they pelt the men who act the murderers' part in the Passion play, and it has even happened that the chief player has himself been murdered by the enraged audience. On one occasion the man chosen to act the assassin's part in the massacre went out and killed himself in a fit of remorse and disgrace. So genuine indeed is this celebration, in other places, that near the spot where the martyr and his family met their end a number of men every year die from their self-inflicted injuries. In Cairo, however, there is scarcely any trace left of real passion, and in any case, this feature of the celebration of the day of Ashoora ought, in the public interest, to be stopped in the city; its stage-managed horrors are loathsome and degrading, and they are repugnant to the better part of the inhabitants.

When the procession had been given time to gain the

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house in which the wounded performers are taken care of until they are fit to appear again in public, the *cordon* of police broke up and the people flooded the roads once more. It was a very amusing crowd, exchanging banter and compliment, handshaking, and the charming greetings of Eastern folk, the good manners of the Arab *canaille*, of which I had read somewhere, including even the stranger and alien. I never heard a word to suggest fanaticism, or any contempt of a stranger, but was rather myself the object of genial courtesies, which found for me a seat in the cafés, and surrounded me with bright smiling faces; while combined Oriental pleasantry and cunning rendered it impossible for me to pay for the coffee which I consumed. I stayed for hours in the street by the Mosque of Hosein, where, of course, the people most thickly congregated, meeting every sort of man, from the learned professor at Al Azar, to the fellaheen youth, recognised by my Cairene friend as from his native village. And the delight of those social hours took away the nausea of the Persian contribution to the celebration of the day of Ashoora.

It may be noted that the Mosque of Hosein and Hassan is now closed on this day, and all the dervish performances described by Lane and others as taking place there, at Ashoora, belong to the past, so far as the public are concerned. A lingering remnant of them remains in a private place near by, where to make any show of them is strictly forbidden.

On several occasions I have been honoured by an invitation from Moslem friends to spend with them one of their "Nights for God." It is a beautiful custom, I think, this of commemorating the chief events of family life

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by thus dedicating certain nights of each year. Perhaps a son has been given to the earnestly praying parents, or some signal blessing of Providence has come to the family in other ways—the Moslem is frankly grateful to God for material success—and a certain night, to be dedicated to the praise of God, will be added to the household calendar. I have heard of cases in which thankfulness for a legacy, or for the father's official advancement, as well as for escape from sickness, or rescue from sudden death, have been made the reason for such ceremonies. Most families have at least one such night in the year; others have as many as three or four.

It will most likely be so arranged that these celebrations fall on a Wednesday evening. To each day of the week different attributes are given—Tuesday being the least favoured day for all human undertakings. On Tuesday it is believed God created all the unpleasant things. In Moslem lands this is always made the day for the execution of criminals. No man would marry on Tuesday—"Married on Tuesday, hanged on Tuesday," is a universal proverb. A tradition makes the Prophet declare that "on Saturday God created the earth, the mountains on Sunday, the trees on Monday, darkness on Tuesday, light on Wednesday, animals on Thursday, Adam on Friday."

The first preparation for a Night for God is to invite intimate friends to a banquet at sunset; and be sure this will prove a bountiful feast, for no matter what the frugality of the ordinary life of the Egyptian family may be, they will provide every possible delicacy in abundance when they invite their friends. After the feast, coffee and cigarettes, of course, when the grave and reverend members of the party will retire,

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possibly to a mosque near by, or failing that to another apartment, to make their evening prayer, or their special Prayer of Praise, while the younger members of the family entertain the rare Christian guest; to extend an invitation to a non-Moslem is a mark of unusual confidence.

In seeking the origin of this form of celebration I was reminded that when anyone brought good news to Mohammed he used to prostrate himself and thank God. He attached special merit to the Prayer of Praise for his followers, and recommended them to add to it certain devotional exercises called "Wird," or reading portions of the Koran, especially at night. "The only way to become united with God is constant intercourse with Him," says the theologian Ghazzali, writing on this subject of the Wird.

After the prayer all the party will assemble in the salemlik, and a sheikh, who has been engaged through being well known as a man who is specially accomplished in reciting the Koran and the traditional stories of the Prophet, takes up his position on a special high chair and begins one of the suras. Immediately every leg is uncrossed, and every negligent attitude of the body corrected; cigarettes are extinguished, and we all sit in silence, broken only by the "Allahs" of approval at the end of any verse of more than ordinary power. The reading is dramatic, and very varied in style, as the matter of the sura changes from threat to pleading, or turns from preaching to law-giving, or to historical record, or to passages of tender poetic charm. In most cases the sheikh engaged for this purpose is blind, as Koran reciting is a recognised profession for the sightless, of whom there are too many in the East. The Oriental

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faculty for memorising has always been famous, and these men all know the whole of the Koran by heart (its length is about two-thirds that of the New Testament), as well as much of the traditional lore of the Prophet.

What is the deep fascination of this Koran, that men and young lads, otherwise impatient of anything approaching boredom, will sit silent and motionless for many hours while it is read, with no lagging of interest in the development of its varying periods.

These "Nights for God" will often last till two o'clock in the morning. The intervals between the suras will only be short, but it is not until the Koran reading is finished—about midnight, when the stories of tradition follow—that relaxation is permitted. I know the Koran is to them the very word of God; but so is the Bible to us. The Oriental is always affected by grandeur of language, and especially by sonorous words of wisdom, and the flash upon life of a proverbial utterance that rings true.

It was the genius of Mohammed that gave the Arabs in the Koran a book not only of laws and moral guidance, but a book which in parts rises to the heights of noblest poetry, as well as of deep wisdom uttered in the form of rhythmic proverbs. While they declare the Koran to be the one great miracle of the Prophet's life, in a very true sense its miraculous power appeals to them afresh, in its style as well as in its teaching, every time they hear the recitation of it.

It is worthy of note, I think, that the genius of Shakespeare finds a deep response in the Eastern mind for some such reasons as I have stated. A native theatre in Cairo has staged several of the plays of our great poet, and it is a most interesting experience to hear

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Hamlet and *Macbeth*, here the greatest favourites, given in Arabic to an audience chiefly of Egyptian students. Patience! it was one o'clock in the morning before the last corpse in *Hamlet* was laid upon the stage; but not a seat had been vacated. The lads who had shared a box with me had followed every line of the play with great eagerness, groaning deepest approval of those great passages which we in the West have always specially treasured. When the play was at last ended, these lads were sad as night, with a sense of haunting terror, from which I could not shake them. "Sir," said one of them, when I questioned him, "it is very dreadful. Not that so many people died, but that they *deserved* their fate!" The proprietor, knowing the moods of his Oriental patrons, followed his invariable custom when he puts on *Hamlet*, and had engaged two comic men to amuse the audience—at that hour of the morning too!—before they went home. My friends said that if they had not laughed at the quips and cranks of the clowns, they would have been afraid, and unable to sleep!

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CHAPTER IV

"It is quite certain that Mohammed won the absolute support of his first converts and swordsmen by first gaining their hearts . . . an apprehension of the highest and deepest reality of existence, took possession of Mohammed. Every fibre of his being responded to it, and the hearts of his followers were kindled by the flame in the Prophet's soul."

Dr. G. M. Grant, *The Religions of the World.*

THE greatest birthday festival of all the year, of course, is the Moolid of the Prophet, which in Cairo is celebrated with a splendour scarcely realised by ordinary visitors. Indeed, Stanley Lane-Poole in his famous book on Cairo dismisses the event as hardly worth noting, after it had ceased to be held in "the waste land called Ezbekîya, then a large lake during high Nile, but a fine open piece of ground when the river retired to its banks." To say, as he does, that "the tents have mostly disappeared," is more than misleading; it is the very antithesis of the truth. I imagine there is no yearly celebration anywhere in the world that can compare with the Moolid en-Nebee, as it is celebrated at the present day at Cairo; where the immense square of decorated and illuminated tents set up at Abbassieh—one of Cairo's near suburbs—make up a scene of unrivalled splendour.

The carnival begins, however, earlier in the day, when all native Cairo is *en fete* for the great procession which musters in the square of Bab-el-Khalk and marches out to Abbassieh. This procession is still a wonderful sight; if it has been shorn of some of its fearful Oriental extravagances and Dervish frenzies, it has lost little or nothing of the variety and colour, and its intense human

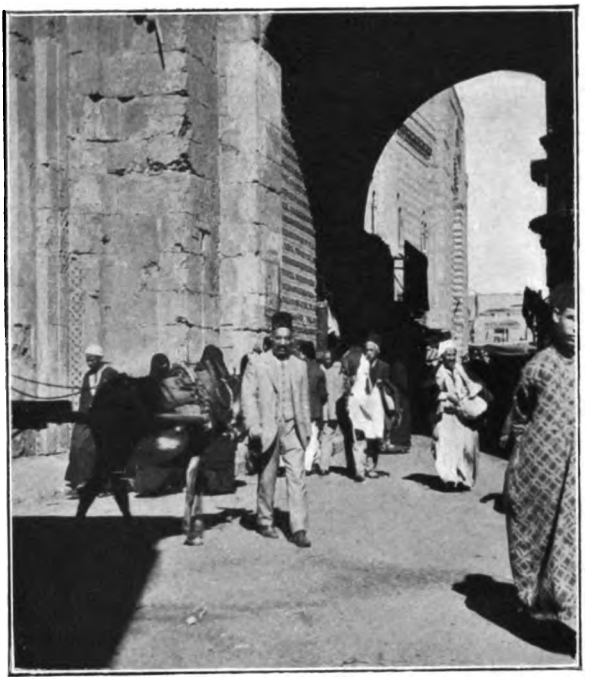
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interest. The Moolid fell this year (1912) on 29th February, which corresponded with the 12th day of Rabeea el-Owwal, the third month of the Moslem year. This date is that of the death as well as the birth of the Prophet. Seeing the procession, as I did, from the porch of the mosque of Sultan Mouayyed, where we faced the procession as it came slowly through the shadows of the fine old gateway of Bab Zoueilah into the sunlit street, with all its many coloured banners waving, I could imagine no sight more characteristic of the East, in the curious blending of the pure pleasure-making of a people's holiday with religious observance. It was a genuine gala day, on which merriment was not diminished because every man constantly cried aloud of the greatness of God.

Before taking my place at the mosque, I enjoyed a delightful hour on the steps of the Arab Museum, watching the gathering crowds of men and boys who were to form the long stream which was to flow through the narrow city alleys to Abbassieh. From all directions there gradually collected groups, wearing distinctive colours, and bearing banners and staves. From every side street and alley, by some invisible control, all these groups eventually concentrated in the great square, in a seething, good-humoured, very noisy mass, looking as little able to shape itself into anything in the form of a procession as a Hampstead Heath crowd might be to suddenly assume a military formation. Of generalship there seemed to be none; except perhaps in the case of one young mounted Egyptian officer who gave a casual instruction here and there.

Now and then the groups would close up, moved by some common impulse; they would chant and

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ONE OF THE FAMOUS CITY GATES AT CAIRO.



THE GATHERING CROWDS OF MEN AND BOYS FOR THE PROCESSION ON THE PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY.

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dance, and then, with hands upon their breasts, follow, with sudden seriousness, the supplication to Heaven of the sheikh who was with them. It was only their moments of prayer that stopped the constant drumming which seems to be a special feature of this fête, for almost every man and boy carried in his left hand a small sort of basin drum on which he beat with a short strap. This drum is called a *tabl*, and is used in certain religious functions, and in the old days was the instrument by which the innumerable dervishes called attention to their coming performances. Even when a group would turn, to buy and eat food, from the portable stands of the innumerable and thriving venders of cakes, rissoles, sweets, and nuts, they contrived to keep up their drumming.

No one, surely, could help taking a delight in the glowing good-nature which actuated all these folk, many of them simple fellaheen from distant country places. There was a sort of communal idea binding them in one interest, which led every man and boy to be willing to share his food with everyone else. In all that great crowd I was quite sure no man went hungry on that day. And were the banners heavy?—a dozen eager hands were ready to take a share of the burden. The blind who abound in every Eastern crowd, and to whom Moslem people are always, as a religious duty, very kind, were to-day cared for with more than ordinary tenderness.

The forest of waving banners—for such it had now become—was a beautiful sight in the golden sunshine. But it might well be asked again how an organised procession, and one able to go through those narrow streets of the city, could ever be evolved out of such

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seething chaos. But knowing these people as I do, I was confident that at a given moment some spring would be touched, the secret of which is unknowable to the Western mind, with its exclusive confidence in the order which can only be gained by elaborate "organisation," and the aim of all this gathering would be perfectly realised.

In this confidence I set off, by a narrow and deserted back-way, to gain the mosque, where I am known to the sheikhs, who are keeping places at the top of the fine steps at the main entrance. Already the scene there is one of marvellous picturesqueness; the dark gateway, in the high city walls, forming a perfect background to the bright colours of the ever-moving crowd, as little organised to make way for a procession as the throngs on the other side of the gate seem to be to form themselves into an ordered stream. Everywhere there are groups of women of the poorer classes, closely veiled,—in the doorways, on the roofs, sitting at our feet on the mosque steps, with restless children (how many of the little girls were carrying babies I do not know),—darting in and out.

On the wide porch steps, too, were some of the solemn-looking boys of the mosque school—junior students of Al Azar—with their red fezes and clean white turbans, and the long black robe, or gibbeh, which falls so gracefully from the neck to the feet; and in the recesses of that beautiful porch were the nice old men, "servants of the mosque," who inquired every now and then if we thought the demonstration "kuwaiyis" or good.

It was a scene to inspire an artist or even a poet, for as the sunlight, falling into the street between the

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irregular roofs, brought out the strange beauty of light and shade which glorifies these native Eastern ways, the fascination of the picture before us was thrilling to minds brought up in the plainer and more sombre West. What spell is it that can so blind one to dirt, and the sordid signs of poverty, and a want of plan and order in these streets? In a more Northern climate the sight of the dirt and the sordidness would be unendurable.

And now, at last, the head of the procession appears in the gateway; and the long, long train of it comes steadily onwards, in as perfect order as any popular demonstration would go through the streets of the West. It is divided into sections, each made up of a sort of guild of the followers of a certain saint or teacher, under the direction of a living sheikh or dervish who rides on horseback, and is generally a descendant of the saint; the guilds being called in Arabic the "ways" of their dervishes.

The different Ways are shown by the special turbans and banners; and at the end of each Way the sheikh rode on his horse, guarded by his followers, who held off the crowds with flag-poles, carried horizontally on each side of the horse. I imagine that in the old days these chief dervishes were more liable to be mobbed than they are in modern Cairo; I have seen such a man on a ceremonial occasion in the Sahara Desert almost killed by the persistence of his devoted followers in embracing him; struggling with each other to get near enough just to touch his burnous, if an actual salute of his person were impossible.

On this occasion, in Cairo, a few people tried to gain a personal salutation from the sheikhs, but without any crowding or excitement. The sheikh usually rode with

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his hands covered in the long sleeves of his robe, a sign of deep humility in an Oriental, and eyes closed, quietly muttering what I believe was the beautiful "Mecca" Sura of the Koran, which is given a place in the Moslem's devotions equal to that given by Christians to the Lord's Prayer.

"Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!
The compassionate, the merciful!
King on the day of reckoning.
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help.
Guide Thou us on the straight path,
The path of those to whom Thou hast been gracious; with whom Thou art not angry, and who go not astray. Amen."

And all the time, in rhythm to the march, the rank and file kept repeating the praises of God: "Great is God! There is no God but God!! Allah!!! Allah!!!"

It was the special office of some of the Ways to carry scent in bottles and sprinkle it on the crowds; others had burning incense on trays. The leader of another Way carried aloft on a beautiful tray a special copy of the Koran, covered with an embroidered cloth. In another Way a whirling dervish gave a dance at intervals in quite a business-like way, with an entire absence of the abandon and frenzy one has read of, his white skirt, evidently heavily weighted at the edge, spreading out like a fan with his rapid twirling.

Occasionally the men and lads who carried banners showed signs of excitement, leading them to persist in dancing until they were about to fall with exhaustion, at the first signs of which they were relieved. The banners were heavy, and there was enough breeze to test the powers of endurance of the stoutest bearers.

One particular banner was treated with great respect: people on the balconies and at upper windows would try

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to grasp its folds to kiss it; and the man carrying it, as he passed me, was on the point of collapse from emotion and exhaustion in his efforts to carry his heavy burden while executing the religious dance. An old sheikh on one side of me told me in an awed voice that "a nail brought from the Kaaba at Mecca was in the pole of that banner"; while on the other side an educated effendi whispered to me in English, "It is not true, of course!"

The last Way, and the longest, to pass is that of the descendants of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's friend and the first Caliph of Islam. I have spoken of the Sheikh el-Bekri, whose palace I visited. He is the chief of all the sheikhs who order these guilds, and is described as the occupant of the Prayer Carpet—sign of a spiritual throne—of his noble ancestor, the first Prince of Islam. On this occasion the sheikh has sent a representative to carry his banner, he himself being already at Abbassieh, where he has generously invited me to a banquet in his tent at sunset.

Knowing this cultured and gentle sheikh, el-Bekri, it is with difficulty that one can realise that only as long ago as the reign of the late Khedive it was at this point of the procession that the ceremony of the Doseh was performed, in which the Sheikh el-Bekri rode his horse over the backs of a number of men who placed themselves closely together upon the ground for that purpose, in the firm belief that, if they were worthy, no injury could come to them. To-day the Bekri Guild passed with little special notice. A murmur of appreciation was heard, and some of the women on the balconies tried to grasp the flags, to rub their faces with them. It should be stated that over eighty years since the Sheikh el-Bekri of that day refused for several

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years to perform the Doseh, or treading. But the time was not ripe for the abolition of so old a rite. In response to entreaty, he appointed a substitute—a blind man, who did not long survive the honour. A unanimous request from the other dervishes led him to perform it again himself. It was regarded as a miracle, the necessary supernatural power being granted to the successive representatives of this family.

When the end of the procession had passed, the crowds betook themselves to their pleasures, many of them making their way to Abbassieh.

The whole celebration has become very restrained and subdued, as compared with earlier days. Mohammed Abdu sought to have it altogether abolished. In the days of the Doseh, the many dervishes gave revolting performances in the streets, which had their origin in more barbaric times, when men threw themselves into a state of catalepsy in a crude but genuine pursuit of a mystic communion with God, but which afterwards came to be little more than the cynical trickery of the charlatan, to impose upon the masses of the people. If the reforming sheikh, Mohammed Abdu, was not successful in abolishing these demonstrations altogether, he did much to suppress their cruder features.

I have seen, in the desert, many of the dervish manifestations—of the genuineness of which there could be no sort of doubt; tricks which call for a more convincing surgical explanation than they have at present received. I have seen live coals held under the bare arms, large packing-needles thrust through the cheeks and eyelids, the eating of quantities of broken glass, and other terrible things. And I have also seen in the desert, too, how nearly allied this sort of thing can be to vulgar

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juggling as soon as it becomes a regular item in a public show.

In Cairo the last stage of these performances in public was a revolting depravity—the ecstasies suggested hashish, and the flesh-piercing became almost undisguised conjuring, with special trick implements.

However, now that from this procession almost all traces of excess have been eliminated, it has become what seems to my mind a reasonable way of celebrating a great popular festival. It was, indeed, an impressive sight to see thousands of the poorest folk making holiday, and, while giving themselves up to the utmost enjoyment, finding their chief delight in extolling the name of God, by continually naming His gracious attributes. Repetition? Yes. But no one can begin to understand these children of the East until they know the power that mere repetition has over their minds. The very Arabic language seems to foster repetition; one of the charms of the Koran is the use that is made of it; and even in ordinary conversation certain forms of repetition have a well-understood use in creating definite cumulative effects. The very greetings even of the poorest are a gradual development from certain simple phrases leading to a perfect expression of courteous interest in the well-being of a friend. In any other language, and with any other people, this method, which never loses an indefinable gracefulness and charm, would lead to an almost meaningless formalism. To the common people in all lands constant repetition of the songs and sayings of the day seems to have an irresistible fascination; in listening to these men chanting their constant refrain, "God is most Great!" "God is Good!" I could not help thinking of certain Bank Holiday

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crowds I know of, singing for ever the same song, and unwearyingly bandying the same phrase, which for the time being possesses the popular fancy.

There are a great many of these Guilds or Ways in Egypt, and membership is highly valued by the members, forming as they do a sort of freemasonry, both in the secrecy of some of their rules and ceremonies and in their mutual obligations. Each Guild is confined to men of a certain class or trade, or from the same distant country. Some have regular fasts at certain tombs, others confine themselves in cells, others meet once a week for whole nights of prayer. In almost all cases part of their religious exercises include the bewailing of sin and the begging of the forgiveness of God, with the assertion of a resolution not to relapse. In all my inquiries of their chief sheikhs I was careful to elicit their rules on this point—so often I had read that "the consciousness of sin" was entirely absent from the Moslem mind. "The guilt of sin is not recognised," says Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall; going on to that awful judgment, "It will be evident that purity of heart is neither considered necessary nor desirable; in fact, it would be hardly too much to say that it is *impossible*, for a Moslem"—the italics being his.

The very courteous invitation I received to partake of the banquet which would be served in the tent of the Sheikh el-Bekri at Abbassieh, "at the setting of the sun," was a great compliment. On the great plain a vast number of splendid tents had been set up in an enormous square. The Khedive's tent, lined with dark red, was in the middle of the top row, and next to his the tent to which I was invited, a very fine one—lined with green—as became the cheif sheikh of the country, by

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whom this very pavilion has been inherited from a long line of the chief descendants not alone of the Prophet but of the great Caliph Abu Bakr. My host has again united the two noble families by marrying the daughter of the house of Sadat—the Prophet's chief representatives, he being the head of the family which has come in an unbroken line from Abu Bakr; and as his father-in-law had no son, he has succeeded to the chief honours of Islam in Egypt.

Other tents in the long rows belonged to the Ministers of State, the great public departments of the Government, the Wakfs administration, the different Ways, and to many of the great Moslem families.

Until this year, even the elder school students had always had a tent of their own. But schoolboy repression is the order of the day under Lord Kitchener's régime, and the lads are sent away lamenting the last vestige of those liberties which had previously enabled them to take part in certain public demonstrations to celebrate the glories of the early days of Islam, and to sing the praises of their Prophet.

Seen in daylight, these tents, with their flags and mottoes, made a wonderful setting for a scene of national rejoicing. Some of them had really beautiful gardens of flowers and palms, made temporarily in the sand; the Bekri tent being particularly beautiful in the floral decorations of its awning-covered court.

Imagine what a scene of splendour this became when a million electric lights, in every colour, sprang forth at sunset, in a thousand graceful devices, all round the vast square, outlining and decorating all the pavilions, and the myriad candles sparkled in the lustre chandeliers of the tents. The immense crowd, including all the

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great procession and its followers, might well groan with deepest delight at what must have seemed to the Oriental mind a foretaste of the splendours of Paradise. To the fellaheen from the remote and silent hamlets the sight must have been almost overpowering.

I need not describe the banquet, except to express further wonder at the organisation that could serve such a feast, prepared and cooked in tents erected for the use of a single day. It was one of a hundred banquets, all prepared in kitchen tents, connected at the back of the pavilions. The luxuries of the East and the West were combined—the Oriental monarch's favourite kunafa, made from a seventh-century recipe, followed by modern ice puddings which might have come from Gunter's.

After dinner we sat on the gorgeous gilded chairs and sofas in the outer tent, when Yemen coffee was brought to us in priceless china cups, which were placed on the gilded tables with tiny square tops peculiar to the East. Many great people, most of them handsomely dressed sheikhs and ulemas, came to the tent to pay their respects to their chief.

Later, we went on a round of visits to the other tents, returning about eight o'clock, as all the dignitaries and nobles began to assemble near the Khedive's tent for the reception of His Highness, who was due at nine o'clock.

By this time the crowds were enormous, but the order maintained by the police was such that, when the Khedive's procession appeared, he was able to drive right round the vast square by a road cut clean and sharp by the police and soldiers through the dense mass of human beings. His Highness's arrival was the signal for the bursting forth of a huge cascade of fire from the centre of

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

THE "WHIRLING DERVISHES" AND MUSICIANS.

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the square, the lighting of many set-pieces of fireworks, the exploding of cannon, the whizz of rockets which showered over us myriads of every sort of coloured star. The bands played, the drums rattled, the crowd "oh'd" with delight; for in the East the people seldom or never cheer.

For nearly an hour the fireworks were maintained with bewildering profusion and brilliancy. During this time the Khedive was holding court in the scarlet tent. As soon as the display ended, he withdrew to his carriage, amidst low salaams, and with his family and suite drove away. At the moment that he left the square the police relaxed their hold of the crowds, which at once became a resistless ocean.

I now made a tour of the tents which I had not already seen. These were on the far side of the square, and were mostly occupied by dervishes, many of them engaged in leading "ziks," which, as we passed, were at different stages of development—from the calm, dignified start, when the name of "Allah! Allah!" is repeated with scarcely a movement of the head, to the last stage of excitement, where some of the dancers had fallen exhausted from the unrestrained and awful exertion to which they had gradually been excited by their dervishes.

These things are nearly as old as the Moolid itself, though many of the ancient features have been dropped. The dancing-girl no longer has a place in such festivities, and the buffoons and conjurers had no stage here that I could discover; and I could find no representative of the lower orders of dervishes who used to chew and swallow red-hot coals and crunch and swallow glass with apparent enjoyment.

When I got home, after mingling with and being

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jostled by these crowds of people, most of them of the poorest class, both of town and country, I did not find one even of the "no fewer than eight lice on my clothing," which Lane so quaintly records as an item of his attending the great Moolid.

The greatest sign of the modern spirit, however, was to be found in one of the larger tents, where a preacher, whom I know well, was standing on a platform and delivering a sermon to a great crowd, who listened to his moral exhortations with deep attention. This is the sheikh I have spoken of in another place, who conducts "missions" in different parts of Egypt. That he is a most effective speaker was manifest: his appeals and warnings were received in breathless silence; then, when the tension had become almost too great, he would tell some apt story from real life, or from Arab history, raising a smile, or sending a quiet laugh round the whole tent. In some ways one could have imagined this to be a meeting of a "tent mission" in England (or Wales); but the inevitable touch of the East could not long be wanting—in one of the pauses the sheikh took out his little scent-bottle, and with its glass "dropper" offered me and other friends who were near the refreshment of a tiny drop of the pure essence of musk on the palms of our hands.

Musk, it may be remarked, was the favourite scent of the Prophet, "the odour of Paradise." In the native parts of Cairo the air is full of this scent on Fridays, for after the great ablution it is usual to scent the body with it before the noonday prayer. I could not say how many presents I and my wife had of bottles of scent given us by sheikh friends, always either musk or jasmine; and as I was obliged to refuse cigarettes, a

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touch of the scent on all occasions was offered me instead.

It was with difficulty that we found the carriage of our Moslem friend who had kindly brought us from Cairo. As we drove away from the scene of another true Arabian night, I wondered again how it had all been brought to a perfect realisation, in this land of "bukra" (to-morrow), of indifference to contract, of seeming impotence in the realm of definite accomplishment and organised effort. But again I realised that in this, as in many other matters, the West often judges stupidly, leaping to conclusions which are utterly misleading. We too easily think the Eastern people wrong at the point where they differ from us. I know it is constitutional with them to push aside vexation, both for themselves and for you, with the eternal "ma'alesh" (do not think of it), and they are unpunctual and slack over the too-readily-made appointment. But for all that, the Oriental, though he chooses other hours than the European for his labours, often works very hard, and occasionally develops a genius for the control of wide-spread interests. If we are ever to understand them, we must remember, as a first principle, that they approach every question in life in a way exactly opposite from ourselves; and this in itself will defeat every attempt at a swift Western judgment of them. I wish there was a more general desire to bring to the study of people who depend upon our understanding of them, and a consequent exercise of justice, a slower and more painstaking temper than in truth one can say exists at the present time.

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BOOK IV

THE GREAT QUESTIONS OF ISLAM

AS INTERPRETED THROUGH THE MOSLEMS THEMSELVES

It is the author's hope and belief that to him, as to others who have ventured, on grounds of conscientious principle, to think for themselves on the subject of Islam, may be justly ascribed "the motives of the humble inquirer who wishes to attribute actions to good intentions when he can, and hopes to be able to discern something short of unmixed evil in a dispensation which has been allowed for centuries to regulate the morals and religious feelings of millions: to claim some favourable consideration for the instructor and legislator of a whole hemisphere, and to do something to dissipate the cloud of absurd and calumnious fable that has so long been gathering around Mohammed's name."—*Retrospective Review* (vol. iii. p. 1).

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CHAPTER I

THE MOSLEM CONCEPTION OF GOD

"In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.
Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds!
The Compassionate, the Merciful!
King of the Day of Judgment!
Thee only do we worship, and to Thee do we cry for help!
Guide Thou us on the right path!
The path of those for whom thy Love is great!
Nor of those with whom Thou art angered, nor of those who go astray!" *The opening Sura of the Koran.*

IT is astonishing to note the facility with which the opposing critics of Islam will define for the Western world the Moslem conception of God, with little or no reference to the life of the people themselves, who most earnestly worship Him, or to the teaching of their devoutest leaders. Such missionary writers as I have previously mentioned (Mr. Samuel M. Zwemer and the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall particularly) will go to every authority who has had a damaging estimate to expound, to pile up the details of their own terrible indictments; if they find a favourable word in Western criticism they will immediately oppose it with a "corrective." Mr. Zwemer actually does this in *Islam: a Challenge to Faith.* If the words of the Koran or of the companions of the Prophet, contradict their assertions, they will turn to some mean tradition of Islam to explain away this contradiction, or will boldly assert that it is unorthodox! (Note 1. These notes are to

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be found at the end of the volume.) These critics will even make it a complaint that the Moslem faith, grounded as it is on the call to the worship of One God—

> "He is God alone:
> God the Eternal!
> He begetteth not, and He is not begotten,
> And there is none like unto Him" (Sura cxii.).

is to be condemned because, among the hundred "excellent names" of God, which the Moslem recites with reverence, "the name of *Father* does not occur" (*Religion of the Crescent*, p. 55). Can the spirit of perversity go beyond this?

It is not surprising that when we come to definite statements about Islam, we find ourselves confronted with a cruel fiction, which any real acquaintance with the people about whom it is written will at once (as it did in my own case) contradict. Of infinite holiness and of infinite love Mohammed had no idea whatever: so Allah is defective in holiness and love. But He is an arbitrary Oriental despot, who makes His enemies experience His wrath in a terrible manner, and loads His faithful servants with benefits, while winking at their misdeeds. The Christian truth that "God is Love" is to the learned Moslem blasphemy, and to the ignorant an enigma. Thus and thus—I quote the very words in which the picture is drawn.

And the people of the West are asked to go on believing, as they always have believed, "because they would," that it is such a God as this who inspires the passionate adoration of hundreds of millions of mankind, and who is worshipped five times a day with a concentration of fervour and an exaltation of praise, the secret of which the Christian world has yet to learn.

It is an instructive thing simply to turn to these

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excellent names of God, on which the Moslem loves to dwell. I will give some of those which seem to have been obscured for Western readers :—

ar-Ra'bmân, the Merciful.
ar-Ra'hîm, the Compassionate.
al-Qaddûs, the Holy.
as-Salâm, Peace.
al-Ghafûr, the Forgiving.
al-Ghaffâr, the Forgiver.
al-Karîm, the Generous.
al-Mugîb, the Answerer of Prayer.
al-Wadûd, the Loving.
al-Barr, Righteousness.
at-Tawwâb, the Relenting.
al-'Hafû, the Pardoner.
ar-Ra'ûf, the Kind.
an-Nûr, Light.
al-Hâdî, the Guide.
al-Bâqî, the Enduring.
ar-Rasîd, the Rightly-Directing.
az-Zabûr, the Patient.

A man once came before the Prophet with a towel in his hand and said, "O Prophet! I passed through a wood, and heard the voices of young birds; and I took them and wrapped them in this towel, and their mother came fluttering round my head, and I uncovered the young, and the mother fell down upon them; then I wrapped them up again; here they are!" The Prophet said, "Open the cloth on the ground." And then the mother went again to her young, and the Prophet said, "Do you wonder at the affection of the mother towards her young? I swear by Him who hath sent me, verily God is more loving to His servants than the mother to these young birds. Return them to their place, so that the mother may have them."

Truly there is in this conception of God "the gentleness and the love that belongs only to great strength." Nearly every sura of the Koran is given in the name of the Compassionate and Merciful God; that He is the Very Forgiving was the constant theme of the Prophet's talk. Is not God the indulgent, the forgiver of sins, the merciful? (Sura xlii. 3) he asks. Your prayer to Him shall be—Grant us Thy pardon, O Lord! For to Thee our journey tends. God, who

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will not burden any soul beyond its power, punish us not if we forget or fall into sin, O our Lord! And lay not on us that for which we have not strength, but forgive us, and spare us, and have pity on us (Sura ii. 285–6).

I do not wonder that the Moslem sees in the appeal of the Koran the voice of "the Heavenly Father calling back through His servant His erring children" (Syed Ameer Ali, M.A.). Indeed, in this sense the word "Father" is not absent even from the stories told of the Prophet himself. In the story of the heavenly vision which Mohammed had, he saw in the first heaven two doors; the angel Gabriel told him that the one door led to Paradise and the other to Hades, and that "the Father of mankind rejoiced over those who were saved, and wept over those of His children who were lost" (Note 2).

But, says the modern critic in the usual vein, the Moslem conception of God never comes near that of an all-pitying Father. It is rather the "mercy" of an autocrat, who spares a few from the general destruction, for motives no more intelligible than those for which Caliban spared some of the land-crabs in Browning's notable poem (*The Reproach of Islam*, p. 134).

In the many talks with the chief sheikhs of Islam which I had on this subject, as also with Egyptians who love their religion no less because they have not been specially trained as the sheikhs have in all its lore, I always found that all such dogmatic statements as these did them far less than justice. In every case the conception of God, as expressed by the Moslems themselves, is greater—sometimes infinitely so—than any such narrow deductions suggest.

As one authority said to me: "If Mr. Gairdner's statements fairly represent us, Islam never could have

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gained any considerable hold over the hearts of vast numbers of men; and certainly, under modern conditions of declining political power, could not maintain its hold. And if a Moslem, looking over the Christian world, and taking note of all its conflicting ideas of God, which embrace almost every doctrine mentioned by Mr. Gairdner as belonging to the Moslem conception of Allah, were to write in the same strain of modern Christianity, that would be as unjust and as painful to the professors of your faith as these writings are to us."

I think of the good Sheikh Yussef, of Luxor, who was made quite miserable by some Christians telling him of the doctrine that all infants who died unbaptized went to eternal fire; and as he knew that Lady Duff Gordon had lost a very young child, it weighed on his mind that perhaps she fretted about this; and so he said he could not refrain from trying to convince her—the only interference with her religious opinions he ever attempted—that God was not so cruel and unjust as the Nazarene priests represented Him, and that all infants whatsoever, as well as all ignorant persons, were to be saved. "Would that I could take the cruel error out of the minds of all the hundreds and thousands of poor Christian mothers who must be tortured by it," said he, "and let them understand that their dead babies are with Him who sent and who took them."

By no possibility could the conception of God, as it is represented by such missionary writers as I have mentioned, ever lead to the saintly life; to such spiritual longing after God as that of the mystics of Islam, whose love for God became a rapture—with no more of the faults arising from the cultivation of ecstasy than Christian mystics have shown.

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And this seeking after a religion of the heart, which we call mysticism—which has always flourished, particularly in Egypt—is not, as a recent writer has shown, a late importation into Islam, or an alien element in it, drawn from Christian Neoplatonic and Buddhist sources, but its roots, he believes, are to be found in the life of the Prophet, and in the Koran itself. When the Arabs saw Mohammed's fasting and meditation they used to say, "He is in love with his maker"; his sense of the "fear of the Lord" was so intense that he always averred that it (and the wrestling with the revelation of his message) turned his hair prematurely white. That strange allegorical verse in the Koran is quoted as an instance of earliest mysticism.

"God is the Light of the Heavens and of the Earth. His Light is like a niche in which is a lamp —the lamp encased in glass—the glass, as it were, a glistening star. It is lighted with the oil of a blessed tree, the olive neither of the East nor of the West, the oil of which would well-nigh give light though no fire touched it. It is light upon light!" (Sura xxiv. 35).

Some of the first commentators, with mystical longings, declared that this light was God's illuminating grace in the heart of man. And there is evidence in the teaching of the Prophet that he realised that, answering to the love of God in the heart, must also be a love to man. "Do you love your Creator? Love your fellow-beings first" is one of the traditional sayings. "Do you wish to approach the Lord? Love His creatures." Another saying of the Prophet's was, "That man, who is most considerate of his kind, is the favourite of God." "How do you think God will know you when you are in His Presence? By your love

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of your children, of your kin, of your neighbours, of your fellow-creatures!" In a recent statement of Moslem doctrine by the Sheikh el-Islam he says: "Man was created to adore his Maker. This adoration may be summed up in two words—to honour the commands of God, and to sympathise with His creatures."

The Koran constantly asserts that Islam is the religion of Abraham. "We have revealed to thee that thou follow the religion—or word—of Abraham, the sound in faith" (Sura xvi. 124). This "word" which Abraham proclaimed teaches (according to the Jewish book Haggadah), first of all, the existence of one God, the Creator of the Universe, who rules this Universe with mercy and loving-kindness. He alone guides the destinies of man. Idolatry, even when combined with the belief in Him, is utterly to be abhorred. He alone is to be worshipped; in Him alone trust is to be placed in adversity. He frees the persecuted and oppressed. You must pray to Him, and serve Him in love, and not murmur when He asks for your lives, or even for lives still dearer to you than your own. As to duties towards man, "Loving-kindness and mercy are the tokens of the faith of Abraham"—mercy, charity, love, are to be extended to every being, without reference to garment, birth, rank, creed, or nationality.

That great mystic poem of the thirteenth century, the *Masnavi*, is a song of love, such love as enables a man to penetrate the divine purposes; love, the "astrolabe of heavenly mysteries," the miraculous touch to the eye, which opens it to the spiritual life, which gives it clairvoyant power to pierce the veil. This love dwells entirely on the *Fatherhood* of God, and will have no belief in any attributes of terror, of

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compulsion, or predestination, or any seeming anomalies in the divine government, which perplexed Job, the Ecclesiast, and endless later theologians. This poem, *Masnavi I Ma' Navi*, the spiritual couplets of Mohammed Rumi, preceded the *Divina Commedia* of Dante by fifty years. As the one poem by general consent is called divine, so the Moslem couplets are always termed spiritual; by some it is called "The Amulet of the Soul."

The poem approaches every question through the writer's love of God. And this conception certainly included some part of what St. John and St. Paul meant by love, as the scholar who translated the poem into English avers. And it included mutual charity, the love of fellow-men, though of course it did not amount to that universal charity, that "enthusiasm of humanity," which possessed St Francis, and impelled him to spend and be spent for the good of the poor and outcast. But the Moslem poet, nevertheless, as regards love to man, enjoins the practice of meekness, patience, kindness, tolerance, in fact, of all the virtues classed by St. Paul as "charity," and constituting the "Christian temper," though, by the way, that temper is hardly confined to Christians.

God judges not as men judge, from outward conduct, but looks at the heart, the secret motives, the "aspiration." Hence forms and rites are of little importance; even the words in which a man expresses his devotion are quite immaterial so long as a worshipper is inspired by the love of God. Man is not saved by "naming the Divine names" with orthodox accuracy, or by worshipping with "fair rites," but by heartfelt love and earnest endeavour to please God. Those who

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worship Him in spirit, these the Father seeks, no matter in what place they may have uttered their prayer. "Fools exalt the mosque," says the Moslem poet, "and ignore the true temple in the heart." As Rumi wrote of the Pilgrimage, "The essential Kaaba is the heart." And—

> "When God ordained the pilgrim rite, that sign
> Was meant to lead thy thoughts to things divine;
> A thousand times *he* treads that round in vain
> Who gives one human heart a needless pain."

It is interesting to turn from the mystics to the preachers and the theologians. Here is an instance, casually chosen, from a series of discourses by Ghazzali:—

Abu'l-Darda asked Ka'b (an early authority on the Bible) what was the most special text—in the Old Testament.

He replied: "God says: The desire of the pious has lasted long, and I am yet more desirous of meeting them. And side by side with this text is written: Whoso seeketh Me shall find Me, whereas whoso seeketh aught else shall not find Me."

Abu'l-Darda said: "I testify that I heard the Prophet say the same. In the history of David it is written: God said unto David—Tell the people of the world that I am the Friend of him that loveth Me, and the companion of him that sitteth with Me, and the Cheerer of him that cheereth himself with mention of Me, and the Associate of him that consorteth with Me, the Chooser of him that chooseth Me, and obedient to him that obeyeth Me. No man loveth Me—and I certainly know this from his heart—but I accept him unto Myself, and love him with a love wherein he is surpassed by none of My creatures. Whoso seeketh Me truly shall find Me, and whoso seeketh aught else shall not find Me. Ye people of the world, discard its vanities, and come unto Mine honour and companion-

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ship and association. Consort with Me, and I will consort with you, and hasten to love you."

It is at this point that a Christian critic should admit that the Allah of the Koran is precisely the Jehovah of the Old Testament, a divine King of kings, dwelling in the highest heaven, a God of goodness and severity, of mercy and of vengeance, who rules the world with almighty and irresistible power, but which can yet inspire the poet's heart with tenderest yearning —like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. And it was here that Mohammed could say to the Jews, to whom the earliest inspired word of God had been sent, "Our God and your God is one" (Sura xxix. 45).

In one of the traditions of Mohammed, God is represented as saying at the Judgment, "O ye sons of men I was hungry and ye gave Me no food," the whole passage being in the words of St. Matthew xxv., a conception of the Judge which can in no way be reconciled with that of a despot.

When the great missionary, Henry Martyn, reached Shiraz, in 1811, he found the Moslems of the Sufi sect there eager to listen to his message. "These Sufis," he wrote in his diary, "are quite the Methodists of the East. They delight in everything Christian except being exclusive. They consider that all will finally return to God, from whom they emanated."

In the opinion of A. von Kremer, the mysticism of Islam and Christendom have many points of contact, and by mysticism perhaps will be first bridged the wide gulf which separates Islam from Christendom, and thereby from modern civilisation.

Another missionary—D. M. Thornton, a man who

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had some affinity to Raymond Lull and Henry Martyn in this field of work—writing in Egypt, in 1907, said: "As is so often the case, I found the leading Moslems were more anxious to know our message than the timorous Christians."

Should it not be admitted that, whether in Christian lands or Moslem, man's conception of God is always greater, as God Himself is, than the creeds in which theologians have sought to circumscribe Him. Mohammed rose above his own restrictions of creed. Although he taught that the Moslem may only pray for believers, he himself prayed for the soul of Zaid, who had always resisted conversion to Islam. The injustice is for men of differing creeds to put a certain narrow interpretation on the beliefs of other men, setting a limit of their own devising to the possibilities of spiritual experience of millions of their fellow-creatures.

The author of *The Reproach of Islam* himself has a certain realisation of this, as all good men must have. "Men are not," he says, "so mad as their logic; and the well-disposed Moslem often has real love for righteousness, and that love may even be intenser because it is the declared will of Allah." But he must needs add: "But there is no real understanding of holiness, or of sin in themselves." In a word, declares that other missionary critic, whose inherent unfairness never fails, "Mohammedanism as a religion . . . is utterly and hopelessly unfitted to quench the thirst for the knowledge of God, which . . . asserts itself in some degree in the breasts of all men worthy of the name" (Note 3). But even this is not so objectionable in its manner of statement, and its terrible suggestion, as are

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the following words: "Point by point, each truth of Christianity, steeped through and through with the tenderness of the love of God, is negated with abhorrence by Islam—the Fatherhood of God, the Sonship and Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Divinity of the Holy Ghost . . . of sin condemned and sin forgiven . . . each several truth of these truths is a blasphemy in the eyes of every Moslem, a lie which Islam came expressly to blast, taught by a Book which the Koran came expressly to replace" (Note 4).

I will end this chapter on the Moslem conception of God with one of the traditional prayers of the Prophet, and some expressions from the prayers of Ali, his son-in-law. The Prophet once prayed: "O Lord, grant me the love of Thee; grant that I may love those that love Thee; grant that I may do the deeds that may win thy love; make thy love to be dearer to me than self, family, or than wealth."

Ali, the Caliph, gave thanks: "To my Lord: He the adorable and only to be adored . . . the Cherisher, whose majesty and might overshadowed the universe. . . . Thou art the adored, my Lord; Thou art the Master, the loving and forgiving; . . . Thy mercy and forgiveness are all embracing. . . . Thou art the helper of the afflicted, the reliever of all distress, the consoler of the broken-hearted. Thou art the friend of the poor; my Lord, Thou art my fortress; a castle for all who seek Thee. Thou art the refuge of the weak; the helper of the pure and true. . . . Thou art the forgiver, I am the sinner; Thou, my Lord, art the merciful, all-knowing, all-loving; I am groping in the dark; I seek Thy knowledge and love; bestow, my Lord, all Thy knowledge and love and mercy."

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CHAPTER II

WHAT DO THE MOSLEMS THINK OF SIN AND OF PRAYER?

"Mohammed's system contains a great deal of pure Christianity. It enforces the virtues of charity, temperance, justice, and fidelity, in the strongest manner; it prohibits extortion, and all kinds of cruelty, even to brutes; and it binds its votaries to the strictest regularity, order, and devotion." Dr. Zouch.

I SUPPOSE that no man who has seen the Moslem at prayer has failed altogether of the feeling that he was in the presence of an intensely sincere expression of the human heart towards the Deity, which is almost entirely absent from the worship of the West. For my part I can never forget the prayers of Islam, as I have seen its votaries perform them, whether in the many different mosques, or under the blue skies of the remote desert "in temples not made with hands."

I have seen a thousand men gathering in little groups of friends, two or three in company, from distant oases, coming together in the desert with the ardent absorption which seemed to remove them from a consideration of ordinary affairs of life; an absorption which possessed them from the moment they left their homes, with a Koranic chant on their lips, until the last obeisance of the great prayer was finished. Led in their devotions by an old man whose saintly and selfless life was known to all, the deep hymn of their concerted praise to the One God went up to heaven in a single compelling note.

In whatever the writings of travellers and others have

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differed, the devoutness of the Muslim congregation at prayer is acknowledged—from Morocco to Mecca, from Constantinople to Calcutta. How many observers speak of these prayers, with their concentration of mind, and their lowly attitudes, and the fervid sighing of the worshippers, manifesting throughout the most profound reverence and veneration, and a complete absorption in the adoration of God. The noble simplicity of the mosque, and the absence of distracting adornment, creates a harmony of spirit which is deeply impressive. A notable exception to such writers is the Rev. St. Clair-Tisdall, who, though obliged to confess to being impressed by the sight, will only speak of the Moslems at worship as "apparently devout."

It was a Christian agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society who once ventured to report: "Much has been said in defence of pompous and splendid forms of worship, and many have insisted on their absolute necessity in order to interest the vulgar; but I will venture to affirm that all the dazzling splendour of external ceremonies, superadded to the Christian system, never produced a solemnity to be compared with that resulting from the simple adoration here exhibited in the Mohammedan mosque. Every sense seemed closed against earthly objects, and a high degree of self-annihilation appeared to inspire the mind of every worshipper. How humbling the reflection, that so little real devotion, and so feeble a sense of the presence of the great Jehovah, is often to be found in assemblies professing to worship Him in spirit and in truth."

> "God is most high. . . . There is no God but God. To God be praise.

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"Holiness to Thee, O God, and praise be to Thee.
"Great is Thy name, great is Thy greatness, there is no God but Thee.
"Praised be my Lord, the exalted One, and glory be to Him.
"May God hear him who praises Him.
"Praise be to Thee the fulness of the heaven and earth.
"God is great. Praise be to Thee, O my Lord, the most high.
"O Lord, forgive me and have mercy upon me, and grant me my portion, and guide me."

Such are the words accompanying the ritual of prayer.

And then when the ritual is finished and the full tribute of adoration complete, an intense silence falls upon these men as they raise their hands to their breasts in submitting to God the secret supplications of their hearts; the hands outstretched as a sure sign of faith that God will give what they ask; the drawing of the hands down the face at the close that they may absorb the immediate blessing.

As an imām said, in a sermon on prayer, "In Namaz (secret prayer) we ought to solemnly realise and be sensible of the fact that we are in a holy atmosphere, inhaling graces and sanctification." What would one not have given to have known something of the nature of those private petitions?

I have made many inquiries on this delicate subject of the theme of the Muslim's private prayers. There is no doubt that material things occupy a large place in them. "Give us this day our daily bread!" To seek refuge with God against the troubles and fears

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and sorrows of life is a prevailing thought. To pray for deliverance from impending grief is as natural to these people as though any idea of fatalism had never a place in their theology. There is a suggested prayer of need; a prayer for guidance; a prayer of praise; and a prayer of repentance, although to ask forgiveness is included in all the other prayers. The Prophet always asked forgiveness of sin both on entering and on leaving a mosque, and a leading Moslem asserts that the theme of all prayers is "always self-humiliation, the glorification of the Giver of all good, and reliance on His mercy." That was a beautiful prayer of the Prophet himself which has been handed down :—

"O Lord! I supplicate Thee for firmness in faith and direction towards rectitude, and to assist me in being grateful to Thee, and in adoring Thee in every good way; and I supplicate Thee for an innocent heart, which shall not incline to wickedness; and I supplicate Thee for a true tongue, and for that virtue which Thou knowest, and for forgiveness of those faults which Thou knowest. Oh! my Defender! assist me in remembering Thee, and being grateful to Thee, and in worshipping Thee with all my strength. O Lord! I have injured my own soul, and no one can pardon the faults of Thy servants but Thou; forgive me out of Thy loving-kindness, and have mercy on me; for, verily, Thou art the forgiver of offences, and the bestower of blessings on Thy servants" (*Miskat*, bk. iv.).

And the prayers of the early caliphs, who were the leaders of prayer, were in the same devotional spirit. My study of this subject, from all the literature—including the Koran—bearing upon it, and from the lives and practices of living men, convinces me that

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

PRAYER AT THE PATRON'S TOMB, IN THE MOSQUE OF SULTAN BARKOUK, CAIRO.

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along with the consciousness of human dignity, so valued in the ancient philosophies, Islam also creates in a very real way that sense of human sinfulness which the Christian evangelist has always encouraged.

It is this which baffles the Western observer, and leads some men to think, as the author of *The Garden of Allah* does, that personal pride, like blood in the body, runs through all the veins of the mind of Mohammedanism. . . . "Their bodies touched the stones . . . they seemed as if they wished to shrink into the space occupied by a grain of sand. Yet they were proud in the presence of Allah, as if the firmness of their belief in Him and His right dealing, the fury of their contempt and hatred for those who looked not towards Mecca, nor regarded Rhamadan, gave them a patent of nobility."

A picture by a great artist, this, of the very scene which I saw in the desert outside Biskra. But I wonder if Mr. Hichens knew, as I did, that that great multitude of men whose concerted prayer created this impression of pride, had left at home every single garment that had colour or decoration of any sort, and every other trace of personal adornment, clothing themselves in simplest white, as a sign of their humility before God. And some of them were of great rank; and who can draw such pictures of the splendour of the Arab Bach Agah, or Prince, as Mr. Robert Hichens can?

And did he talk with friends from amongst them, as I did, when the prayer was over, and find any trace of hatred or pride? On the very evening of that Grande Prière, an Arab friend, his simple white changed for a costume gorgeous in its colour and its gold embroideries, took a meal with my wife and me at our hotel; and a

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gentler or more genially friendly guest it would be impossible to have in any land. And I have heard these proud Arabs refer to Mr. Hichens himself in such terms of affection as would throw his word-picture out of perspective, if he could sacrifice his artistic sense so much for justice (Note 5).

But to turn from the literary artist, there is the verdict of authors who look upon these men of Islam with the eyes of the Christian worker for their conversion. The Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner sees "the cringing manners, the sensuality, the childishness, the downright vulgarity, that may inwardly characterise yonder statuesque individual." "Prayer," says another writer, "is reduced to a mechanical art. There is no real fellowship with God. The Moslem conception of God itself forbids this" (the author of *Egypt and the Christian Crusade*).

Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall admits that the scene presented in the mosques "by row after row of these white-robed and finely turbaned figures, grave, earnest, and apparently devout . . . is most impressive," while he admits that it does not become us too hastily and uncharitably to judge whether his seeming devotion is or is not heartfelt. And he thereupon proceeds to prove that the tendency is for the great mass of Moslems to become formalists. "In the whole Koran, and in the whole Traditions, I do not know of a single passage which teaches that prayer, to be efficacious, must be in spirit and in truth, nor that men should, or even could, love God as well as fear Him." The Koran, Mr. Zwemer says, ever keeps the supreme question of salvation from sin in the background.

For my part, I maintain that the fear of God, and

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the love of God, are the beginning of the wisdom of the Moslem East. I am convinced that in prayer, of all things, these people are sincere. The Prophet would not have wept with the fervour of his emotions, as a hundred witnesses testify—if his prayers had lacked sincerity and truth, any more than the obvious spiritual exaltation of these men at their devotions now can be solely the outcome of play-acting or mechanical drill.

When the fiercely alert Moslem troops burst upon Egypt, the Romans found that the only chance of taking them at an advantage was during their prayers. Prayers doubtless that were in the spirit of that fervid petition of the Prophet before going into the first battle of Islam—"O Lord, I beseech Thee forget not Thy promise of assistance and of victory. O Lord! if this little band be vanquished, idolatry will prevail, and the pure worship of Thee cease from off the earth." Prayers that were inspiring as those which the Prophet offered in the mosque, on his last visit to the House of God, when men said, "The Lord verily hath this day granted refreshment in prayer."

The Roman spies had reported, "We have seen a people who prefer death to life and humility to pride. They sit in the dust, and they take their meals on horseback. Their commander is one of themselves, there is no distinction of rank among them. They have fixed hours of prayer, first washing their hands and feet; and they pray with reverence."

Indeed, prayer was always their first thought, in the hour of danger and in the hour of victory. Could they forget how, not many years before, the troops of their Prophet, having prayed on that momentous night before he battle of Badr, got peace of mind, and God sent

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"sleep, a sign of security from Him" (Sura viii. 11), while their enemies were kept awake all night by fear. Or could they forget that when the enemy at the battle of Uhud was in sight, the Prophet still went on with his usual morning prayer.

When Omar received the news of the submission of Egypt, he went back at once to the mosque and led the prayers. The very place where Amr had put up his standard, or tent, outside old Cairo, must be the place of prayer, to be turned into a mosque in the early days of victory, for a mosque was their first necessity. The mosque of Amr, the oldest mosque in Egypt, stands there to this day to mark the spot. These are not the acts of formalists.

If any reader would see how far the criticism of a Western writer can go in putting the most adverse interpretation on every detail of the teaching and observance of a religion to which he is opposed, I would direct him to the chapter on "Ritual," in *Islam: a Challenge to Faith*, by Samuel M. Zwemer. The author is contemptuous of the ablutions, going to all the absurd early writings on the subject, in which the theological pedants exaggerated details, and ignoring all those spiritual teachings which so clearly laid down that the washings were for the heart. "In practice *moral purity* as a preparation for prayer is never alluded to, nor does the Koran allude to it," he says.

Let us eschew detached texts—I maintain that the spirit of the Koran is, that Piety consists in the Fear of God. As for moral purity, I have often heard the instructions, on the subject of the ablutions, of the sheikhs to their pupils —in Al Azar, at Tanta, at various modern schools in Egypt, and always the theme was—Cleanliness is good, for health, for comfort, for decency. "The practice

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of religion is founded on cleanliness," the sheikh would remind them that the Prophet said, and so Mohammed himself was always scrupulously clean. "And," continued the sheikh, "it is right and fitting that when you come before God, you should be as clean as possible. As for the manner of the cleansing, we follow the example of the Prophet," and here the sheikh would give precise explanations. "But all this cleansing is but a sign. No sins are washed away with water. All these preparations must lead you to approach God with a clean heart."

The hammam, or bath, is a great feature in all Moslem towns and cities. In Biskra, an oasis of the Sahara Desert, I found no less than six large public baths. In the majority of continental towns of the same size one bath would be a rarity. It is recorded of Cordova, that in the height of her glory, under Moslem rule, she had nine hundred public baths—a reproach and wonder to the medieval Christians, with whom in those days, and indeed up to the time of Philip II., the husband of our Queen Mary, dirt was typical of sanctity, and cleanliness the mark of infidelity. Nothing is more remarkable than the sight of robust Islam bursting into a Christian world enfeebled not only by sectarian strife, but by monastic foolishness. The Coptic monks, for instance (see *The Book of Paradise*), were practising fasting as a sort of competitive sport between the different monasteries in Egypt, and the non-washing of their bodies, with an idea of adding sanctity with accumulating dirt.

At Nasrieh School, in Cairo, especially, I was struck with the reasonable nature of the teaching given to the sons of the influential families in Egypt. The sheikh, for instance, explained the washing and care of the hands, holding up his own beautiful hands to show how no dirt

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must be left even under the nails. Then he illustrated the washing of the ears, the cleansing of the passages of the nose, the scrupulous cleaning of the teeth after each meal. Here was religion and hygiene, cleanliness and godliness, in fact, in one lesson. For the sheikh knew how important all this cleansing was to health in hot countries; and he gave quotations proving that these ideas of hygiene were clear also to the Prophet.

In the same way I certainly think that as Mohammed was not unaware of the value of the prostrations in prayer as physical exercises, even to the assistance of the digestive functions, so he also knew how important to health the ablutions would be to all the world of Islam. He thought it a divine intention that holiness should be served by the handmaiden of hygiene, as it might be imagined Moses did, in the many laws he instituted in which man approached God by ways of personal cleanliness and propriety. The first great thought was not the physical cleansing, but the spiritual preparation for the worship of the Creator.

The great theologian Ghazzali puts the whole matter of the ablutions in this way—There are four degrees of purification, of which the first is, the cleansing of the body from all pollution, filth, and excrements; the second is the cleansing of the members of the body from all wickedness and unjust actions; the third, the cleansing of the heart from all blameable inclinations and odious vices; and the fourth, the purging a man's secret thoughts from all affections which may divert their attendance on God; adding that the body is but as the outward shell in respect to the heart, which is as the kernel. And for this reason he highly complains of those who are superstitiously solicitous in

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exterior purification, avoiding those persons as unclean who are not so scrupulously nice as themselves, and at the same time have their own minds lying waste and overrun with pride, ignorance, and hypocrisy. "Whence it plainly appears," remarks Sale, "with how little foundation the Mohammedans have been charged by some writers with teaching or imagining that these formal washings alone cleanse them from their sins."

Mr. Zwemer only mentions this great teacher and theologian of early Islam by name once in his book *Islam*. But he quotes, unconsciously, I imagine, a number of damaging details from one of his works, especially about the sensual heaven. Of the great wealth of inspiring teaching left by Ghazzali he says no word, notably in this matter of the ablutions, but boldly declares that no mention is made in "all books of practical theology," of moral purity as a preparation for prayer. A great authority in Cairo, Sheikh Rashid Rida, editor of *Al-Manar*, stated to me that it was when Ghazzali was old and doting he wrote the one deplorable book which has been made so much of by writers like Mr. Zwemer, but which is repudiated by all reasonable Moslems. Abdul Rahman ibn Ishag, especially refuted the contents of this work; but reference to it appear and reappear in the works of men who build up theories of Islam from books rather than from experience and life. Nothing is easier than to fit a great mass of matter, in this way, into a preconceived scheme, especially in matters of theology and morals.

But to Mr. Zwemer the details of the instructions for cleansing are "puerile," especially those concerning the cleaning of the teeth. Why puerile? Should the term be applied to the elaborate teachings of Moses in

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the Book of Exodus, which often go into the minutest details? The splendid teeth of nearly all Moslem people, to which all travellers bear admiring testimony, are a sufficient justification of the simple laws to which they may be attributed. I can see nothing puerile in the suggestion that the mouth shall be cleansed for the praise of God; I imagine it comes from the same primitive instinct which makes the Saturday night "tubbing" such a universal family habit with the Christian peasants as a preparation for the worship of the Sabbath.

One Arabic historian, Abu'l Fida, asserts that ceremonial washings and religious cleansing of the teeth were practised by the Arabs before Mohammed's time. If this is realised, I suggest that the charge of puerility will be withdrawn, in the attempts that are being made to prove that it was from the "days of ignorance" that everything good in Islam was drawn.

In any case, it comes oddly from an American, especially, to see puerility in the care of the teeth, when it is America that has led the way to a scientific dentistry. It might be thought a remarkable, and a worthy thing, this teaching, insisted upon at a period when probably such a thing as a tooth-brush was unknown in Britain.

While I write these lines a "health-week" is being held in England, and from the lectures by medical experts I gather that in their opinion the mass of our people still have no idea of the necessity of teeth-cleaning. At the elementary schools we are just beginning to teach the children of the poor the use of the tooth-brush, encouraging them thereto by a gift of the brush itself, at the State's expense. May the result in the future be such teeth as I have seen in North Africa, in Egypt,

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and Nubia, and the Sudan, where puerile details, learnt in the Koran school, have taught the poorest man and woman, living even in tents and mud huts, the inviolable habit of cleansing the teeth after every meal.

And this is the invocation many of them use—it is not compulsory, as all the ablutions may be done in silence, or a simple prayer may be said—"Vouchsafe, O God, as I clean my teeth, to purify me from my faults, and accept my homage, O Lord. May the purity of my teeth be a sign for me of the whiteness of my face at the Day of Judgment."

Moslems use the miswak, a kind of tooth-brush made of fibrous wood, about a span long; they will not, of course, use any brush made of pig's bristles.

As for the teaching of the Koran, on the spiritual import of worship, the need for expiation, and the preparations for the service of God, its plain words may speak for themselves :—

"It is not the flesh or the blood of that which ye sacrifice which is acceptable to God; it is your piety which is acceptable to your Lord" (Sura xxii. 38).

"It is not righteousness that ye turn your faces in prayer towards the East or the West; but righteousness is of him who believeth in God" (Sura ii. 172).

"The East and the West is God's; therefore, whichever way ye turn, there is the face of God" (Sura ii. 109).

"Piety consists in the fear of God" (Sura ii. 185).

"Those who, after they have done a base deed, or committed a wrong against their own selves, remember God, and implore forgiveness of their sins—and who will forgive sin but God only?—and persevere not in what they have willingly done amiss. As for them, pardon from their Lord shall be their reward" (Sura iii. 129–30).

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"Such portion only of a man's devotion is acceptable to God as he offers with understanding and true devotional spirit," is a saying of the Prophet reported by Abû Dâûd and by Nisâî; and Ali said, "Neither will profession suffice unless it produces a corresponding practice."

And so again and again. The true believer must turn to God with repentance, and with a determination to mend his life. He must "believe and do" (Sura ii. 76). The first words he utters, in a low voice, before the actual prayer begins, are, "I propose to offer to God with a sincere heart" these prayers.

Supplication to be effective must be in accordance with certain clear conditions; the person offering them having the following qualifications:—

i. He must be living on what he has honestly acquired.
ii. He must call on God with firm faith in His help.
iii. His heart must not be distracted.
iv. He must not ask what is wrong, or what may injure his relatives, or any Moslem.
v. He must not ask for things impossible.

Here are the full and exact rules to be observed when offering supplication and intercessions:—

i. To choose the proper time.
ii. Before offering such petitions, to perform the ablutions and canonical prayers, to turn to the Kibla, lift up the hands towards heaven, confess sins, repent, praise God, and ask for blessings on the Prophet, at the beginning, the middle, and the conclusion.

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True repentance comprises the following :—

i. Forsaking sin.
ii. Sorrow for having committed sin against God.
iii. Firm purpose never to return to sin.
iv. Making amends, on obtaining forgiveness, if the sin has been committed against man who has been injured thereby.

It is not true to say, " expiation of sin is not essential to forgiveness," as is often asserted.

Of God's forgiveness of sin, the belief is full and clear, both in the Koran and in all the teachings of tradition and authority. It is even believed that when a bad act is committed, the angel of the bad actions, who is always at the left hand of every man, asks the angel of the good actions, on the right, whether he is to write it down. The good angel orders him to wait for the space of six hours, in the hope that the sinner may repent, and ask for pardon.

" The presence of the heart " is again and again insisted on. Ali said that devotion offered without understanding brought no blessing.

As for the consciousness of sin, and the need of salvation from it, the teaching of Islam stands also clear, and in the foreground.

The cry for forgiveness is in every prayer.

" Have mercy, O God, for of the merciful Thou art best," is the Koranic petition.

The first passion that took hold of Mohammed was to call men to the worship of the One God, to repent of their sins, to prepare for the great Day of Judgment. And this he preached also to himself—" unless God cover me with His mercy," he said to Ayesha, " I cannot enter Paradise." His dying prayer was, " Lord, grant

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me pardon, and join me to the companionship on high." Then at intervals, "Eternity in Paradise! Pardon! Yes! the blessed companionship on high!" And then again, a prayer for forgiveness of his former and latter sins.

Ali, who knew the Prophet's mind so intimately, for it was as a lad that he had first loved and followed him, in every recorded prayer of his own, pleads again and again for forgiveness of his sins to the "All-loving" God. In one prayer he gives thanks "to the Lord, whose mercy extends to every sinner, who provides for even those who deny Him." "Who forgiveth, in His mercy, our greatest sins, and loveth all creation."

It was a mighty and victorious warrior who cried, in his last hour, with self-abasement at the thought of his sin, and claiming no merit from his prayers, "Almighty God, Thou hast commanded, and I have disobeyed: Thou hast forbidden, and I have transgressed. I am not innocent enough to deserve Thy pardon."

Purposely I have passed over all the records of the mystics in this matter of sin and prayer, choosing to look at Islam in the days of its early simplicity, from which most of the goodness that is in it to this day comes.

We may mourn that a people so good and great have no share in an Atoning Sacrifice (who of the Christian peoples does not mourn this?), and long to see them comforted and softened by this nobler version of the love of God, which passeth all understanding; but if we are to be in a position to help them, we must be just, even where justice seems to impede our immediate appeal; and, above all things, we must cultivate a generous and selfless patience.

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CHAPTER III

A STUDY IN FANATICISM

"Verily they who believe (Moslems) and they who follow the Jewish religion, and the Christians, and the Sabeites—whoever of these believeth in God and the last day, and doeth that which is right, shall have their reward with their Lord; fear shall not come upon them, neither shall they be grieved." Sura ii. 59.

In nothing has injustice been more insistent than in the way the Moslem religion has been popularly accounted almost synonymous with fanaticism. So much is this the case that it will be found that almost every writer on Islam brings to the subject a preconceived idea with which his observations—often unconsciously—are made to agree.

This insistence is the more strange from the little support the charge gets from the impartial historians, whose story always goes to show that from earliest days Islam has exhibited a toleration for which they have not received sufficient credit; while any writer who has really lived intimately amongst the people has quickly found that the popular Western notion—like so many of these floating verdicts about foreign people in every part of the world—was entirely misleading.

Lane declared that the Egyptians in Cairo combined toleration with a pride which had something of silent contempt in it towards other religions. It is this pride which so often misleads. There is a sort of *naïvéte* in the

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Moslem belief that his religion is the best, a sort of theological conceit which, however, is generally free from all bitterness.

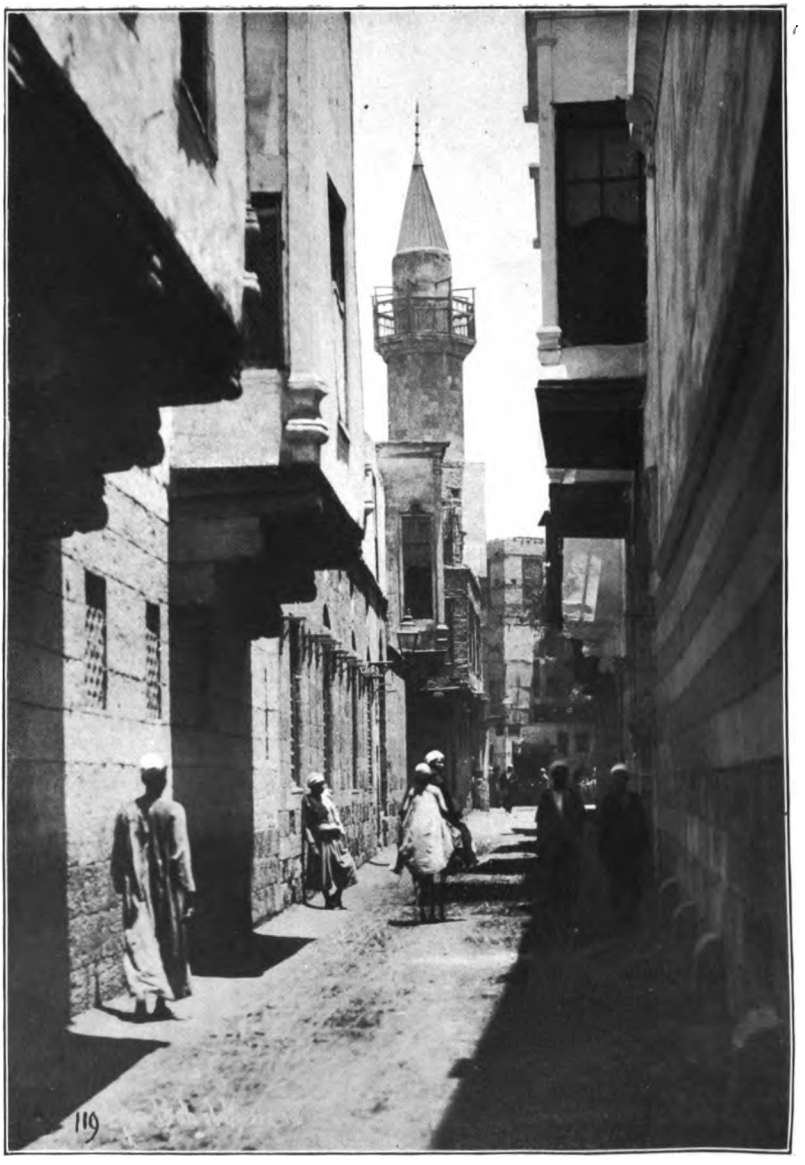
On my own part, in places as varied as Sidi Okba in the Sahara Desert (after being warned of the place as particularly fanatical owing to the great saint's tomb being there), in the Algerian and the Egyptian town and village, in many a bedouin camp, as well as in Cairo, the centre of Islam's culture, I have found nothing but toleration.

I have been invited by a sober Cadi of a desert village—who had never known a Christian man before—to join him in a simple petition at the tomb of his patron saint, that the good God would bless us, and let us meet in the streets of Paradise if we might never meet again on earth.

And long after this and similar experiences, I came across the record of a Christian woman who loved the people of Egypt, and had discovered the same spirit in them. The Cadi of Keneh invited this lady to the festival of the great saint there, and when she hesitated, thinking some of the Moslems might be offended by her presence, he declared that if any such ignorant persons were present it was high time they learnt better, and said it was by no means unlawful for virtuous Christians, and such as neither hated nor scorned the Muslimeen, to profit by or share in their prayer, and that she should sit before the sheikh's tomb with the Mufti—all of which happened.

The followers of Jesus, declared one of her Moslem friends, a Cadi, or magistrate, have "received guidance" and are "not among the rejected." Those who do right shall have their reward. "Even unbelievers God

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

A Street in Native Cairo, penetrated by the Noon-day Sun.

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will not defraud." Her kindness to the Moslem poor broke down all barriers; the sheikh even offered to read the "noble Koran" with her, an unusual thing, but not in any way prohibited, as I know from experience.

I was myself sitting once with a Moslem friend to whom had befallen a great sorrow. The Koran was being read, and a distinguished stranger, beckoning an acquaintance of mine to him, whispered, "There is a Nazareen here."

"Yes! he is a friend! He walked to-day with us to the tomb."

"But remember, this is Holy Koran!"—a gentle word of warning.

And then, when he saw I listened with the proper deportment of respect, and with no sign of the scorn they always expect from Christians, he came to me in an interval to greet me as a friend.

It was a Moslem sheikh who put the matter of religious differences in this way: "Look at your servant boy. Can he understand a hundredth part of the thoughts of your mind? Nevertheless he loves you, and obeys you with pleasure and alacrity; and will you punish him because he knows not all your ways? And shall God, who is as much higher above us as you are above your slave, be less just?" And he quoted the Koran, and the ulema, to show that the religious beliefs of men are not to be judged by man.

This sheikh was taught in the school of Al Azar. The sternest rules are laid down against answering questions on such matters as these, by those who have not certain knowledge. I have sat in the chief sheikh's private room at Al Azar, as I have described, and heard a lecture

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to advanced students particularly insisting on this reserve. The man of secular education should not answer at all such theological questions, whatever his own judgment may be.

On another occasion a great Alim, deeply versed in Koranic knowledge, visited Lady Duff Gordon at Luxor, and said he hoped she had not been molested on account of her religion, and if she had, she must forgive it, as the people here were so very ignorant, and *barbarians were bigots everywhere*. She replied that the people of Luxor were her brothers; and a local man told how she had served God amongst them, and in times of sickness had risked her life every day. To which the great theologian replied, "And if she *had* died, her place was made ready among the martyrs of God, because she showed more love to her brothers than to herself!"

It was in Egypt, as long as a hundred and fifty years since, that a Moslem sheikh observing the saintly life of the Moravian missionary, John Henry Danke, said, "Such Christians as you are sure to go to heaven."

There is no need to ignore facts which seem to prove something quite contrary to this. That apostasy is punishable with death, according to a Koranic text, and that as recently as 1843 such a sentence was carried out in virtue of a decision of an Ottoman law court; and that Lord Cromer had to interfere, once or twice, to protect from maltreatment Moslems who had perverted from their early faith.

The truth is in the Alim's words—barbarians are bigots everywhere! Christianity has advanced beyond some very dark days in this respect, although her "perfect work" is not yet accomplished even in the matter of toleration and liberty. There are Christian Sisters

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in Europe, of whom I have heard, whose hospital rules would not allow them to nurse Protestants, and Prussians who must needs refuse charity to non-Lutherans. It was only in 1908 that a great storm was raised by Protestants in London, at the attendance of the late King Edward at a memorial service to his friend King Carlos of Portugal in a Roman Catholic church.

Surely toleration is, everywhere, of a slow growth. About the time that that "fanatical agitation"—as it was called by the Moslem world, which took note of it—was going on in London, an Englishman was making a journey across the desert from Algeria to Tripoli, in the course of which he was, of necessity, having dealings with the Moslem confraternity of the Senussi, about whom so much has been heard lately in connection with Italy's onslaught. The very name of the Senussi stands in the West for fanaticism.

Mr. H. Vixer was formerly a Christian missionary, and is now an official in Northern Nigeria, in which capacity he travelled. He made no attempt to conceal either his nationality or his religion. And what treatment did he receive from the men of this brotherhood? Men driven painfully into the desert to live an austere religious life away from enemies whom they hated, not because of their Christian faith, as is now being shown, but because of the offences and oppressions of their rule. So far indeed were the Senussi from opposing him with the fanatical hatred which they are universally supposed to entertain for Europeans, that they took him into their religious houses, and gave him help and protection; and he learned afterwards, that when some brigands who had followed his caravan begged admittance at one of the houses of the brother-

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hood they were driven off, their action in contemplating an attack upon strangers being repugnant to the Senussi Order.

To turn to history is to find a succession of stories just as surprisingly contradictory of popular beliefs as this is. When the Prophet himself marched upon Mecca, and crowned his life's work by taking the city which had scorned him and driven him away from its gates, what a kindly and bloodless re-entry he made.

In the days of his power his generous thoughts were for Egypt, which he foresaw would come under the sway of his followers. With an eye perhaps upon that fierce disciple, Omar, he commanded consideration for the Coptic Christians there—"Be kind to the men of the curly hair in Egypt, for they are your uncles and your brothers!"

And how nobly Omar adopted these principles, which must have seemed such an innovation to him. Even in turning out of Arabia the Jews and Christians, at what he thought to be the Prophet's wish, Omar's dealings with them were marked by so much mercy and fairness, that even opponents admit there can be little doubt that his actions in Arabia were dictated by motives of sound policy (*Mohammed and His Power*, p. 176). The fact that Arabia has been closed to non-Moslems is often cited as a proof of the fanaticism of the Arab people. This Christian writer has, however, been fair enough to say, "Arabia was the stronghold and recruiting ground for the armies of Islam, tribal jealousies were hard enough to deal with, and Omar felt that it was indispensable that the bond of religion should be unbroken." It is certain that the onward movement of civilisation will remove the restrictions,

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too long maintained after the legitimate causes had passed away. Indeed, I have myself been promised immunity, by Moslem friends, from opposition if I would accompany—as a Christian, of course—a certain influential Pilgrimage Caravan to Mecca. But this is premature. Meanwhile, the railway advances to the Holy City.

The story of the Christian Church in Egypt, at the period of the Conquest, was deplorable in every way, and in nothing more than the entire absence of any conception of the principles of toleration. Even under the fire-worshipping Persians, the Copts had been allowed to practise their own form of religion. It was Cyrus, the Christian Primate of Alexandria (who had been appointed by the Emperor Heraclius) who resolved to wrest this liberty from them. And by a bloody persecution he forced upon them the doctrine of Chalcedon—with stripes and death as the alternative. Such revolting and barbarous cruelties were practised to force upon the people one Christian creed in the place of another, that it is not surprising to find the Copts declaring that subjection to the Moslems would improve their lot; that the yoke of Mohammed would be lighter than the yoke of the most Christian Emperor Heraclius.

And this welcome by Christians, of Moslem rule, as a providential deliverance from the tyranny of fellow-Christians, by no means stands alone. In Syria men thanked God that "He delivered them out of the hands of the Romans by means of the Arabs."

It was shortly after the exaltation of the Cross at Jerusalem, that the Christian order went out to banish or slay the Jews, who fled to the desert beyond Jordan. When they saw the advancing banners of Islam, they

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had reason to rejoice at the approach of the enemies of the Roman Empire.

When the conqueror, Amr, was at the gate of the fort of Old Cairo, the sort of toleration he found prevailing amongst the Christians inside may be gathered from the fact that the Christian tyrant, Cyrus, was virtually in command.

The Moslem terms of surrender were that the persons and property of the Copts would be respected, that they would retain full control over their possessions, and all existing rights of inheritance, that their churches would be left uninjured, and the practice of their religion unmolested; their priests would be exempt from taxes.

And so it came about that in Egypt, in the novel atmosphere of religious freedom thus introduced by the Moslem Conquest, the Coptic Church revived; and it was the Moslems who would not then allow the Copts to start again the war of the sects, but granted protection impartially to the Copts and the rival Melkites.

In telling the story of the Arab conquest, Dr. Butler found few pages in the annals of Egypt more agreeable reading than those which describe the extremely friendly relations which prevailed between some of the Caliphs and the Coptic Abbots, and the delight which the Moslem rulers took in visiting picturesque and pleasant convents (Note 6).

They were but following their master, Mohammed, whose charter, granting liberty to the monks of St. Catherine near Mount Sinai, and to all Christians, has been designated as one of the noblest monuments of enlightened tolerance that the history of the world

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can produce. It was in accordance with this charter that the terms of the surrender in Egypt were arranged.

The same noble clemency marked the taking of Jerusalem. In Mr. Pickthall's vivid words—Omar's severity towards the Christians was so much below their anticipations, that he figures in the popular memory almost as a benefactor of their religion. They were deprived of their church bells, but kept their churches; and if large numbers of them embraced El-Islam, it was through self-interest (or conviction), and not at the point of the sword, as has been represented. Indeed, the toleration shown by the Moslems towards the vanquished, though less than we should practise nowadays, is without a parallel in Europe till many centuries later. It was not emulated by the Crusaders, who, rushing to wrest the Holy Sepulchre from the clutch of the "foul paynim," were astonished to find it in the hands of Christians, whom, to cloak their disconcertion, they denounced as heretics.

The whole story of Omar's entry into Jerusalem, a city almost as sacred then as now to the Moslem as to the Christian and the Jew, notwithstanding all the libels of the Crusading Popes to the contrary, shows not only the spirit of wide tolerance, but even a delicacy of consideration for the Christians there (Note 7). With a wonderful simplicity of personal manner, only equalled by all lack of ceremonious display, Omar rode through the Holy City side by side with the Christian Patriarch. He laid the foundation-stone of the mosque, which to this day bears his name, and then left Jerusalem with as little ostentation as he came (Note 8).

The government Omar instituted was in the same spirit as we have seen, and which fifteen years after the

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taking of Damascus led the Nestorian bishop to write, "These Arabs, to whom God has given in our time the dominion, . . . fight not against the Christian religion; nay, rather they defend our faith, they revere our priests and saints, and they make gifts to our churches and monasteries." The great church at Damascus was then used at the same time both by Christians and Moslems.

That this spirit was lasting is proved by the fact that John of Damascus, a Christian theologian of the eighth century, lived under the protection of the Moslems to escape the vengeance of the Byzantine Emperor, whom he had opposed in a controversy about the worship of images. The Moslems not only protected him but gave him employment. And all the time he was known as a Christian, and used much of his time in writing treatises against Islam, in which he was greatly helped by his knowledge of the Koranic text.

Indeed, through all the best days of Islam the same principle of toleration was manifested. It became a Moslem maxim that "the real learning of a man is of more public importance than any particular religious opinions he may entertain." A mind without learning is a body without a soul; glory consists not in wealth but in knowledge, were two of the sayings of the founder. The Caliphate was held during several ages by monarchs who rank amongst the most accomplished by whom any empire has been swayed.

It is not too much to say that religious differences were forgotten. "I chose this learned man," said the Caliph Almamon, speaking of Messul, whom he was criticised for making President of a College at Damascus, "not to be my guide in religious matters, but to be my teacher of science." And the same principle opened

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the doors of all the chief universities of the Moslem world, beginning with Cordova, to men of learning, regardless of creed.

In Spain the love and pursuit of learning, especially of literature and science, drew all men in search of culture to that part of the world, and established "a toleration of which modern times hardly offer us an example" (Note 9). All the barriers which separated Christians, Jews, and Moslems were effaced; here they learned to speak the same language, enjoying an unhampered social life, singing the same songs, quoting the same poets, all working with one accord in the work of a common civilisation.

The mosques of Cordova were the leading schools of the world; they numbered thousands of students, and were splendid centres of scientific and philosophical study. By Christian testimony Cordova was "the brightest splendour of the world." It was indeed the golden age of literature and science in all the history of Spain, which reached its zenith under Hakan, whose library alone would have made him famous for all time. In the story of eight centuries of chivalrous and enlightened rule in Spain, the most prosperous era of that country's riches, the cultivation of the soil, and in populousness, as well as of culture, even the historians of the enemies of the Moors cannot record a single instance of cold-blooded cruelty.

And what succeeded this era? A Christian priesthood goading on a civil power to treat with unexampled fanaticism the people from whom they had always received humanity and protection. The fiendish invention of an Inquisition. And the ruthless bigotry which could burn the literature of all that splendid

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dynasty, the labours of philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, and poets, gathered here from every part of the world.

There is no need to labour this point of the fanaticism of which the Christian peoples proved themselves capable in their days of partial enlightenment (Note 10). The sheikh of Luxor was right—where people are ignorant, there are bigots, no matter where, and it is in the religious field that fanaticism ever finds its most congenial soil!

The "Sword of Islam" is a powerful weapon to use against this religion. Conquest was, of course, by the sword, as it always must be, East or West; as it is to-day, when we are witnessing a war in Tripoli, blessed by the Church as being for the placing of the Cross above the Crescent. But the use made of the sword need not be exaggerated, nor the work of such a scholar as T. W. Arnold, who proved that the sword played but an inconsiderable part in the spread of Islam, treated as so pernicious as to need an "antidote." "It is not in the cruelties of the persecutor or the fury of the fanatic," says Arnold, "that we should look for the evidence of the missionary spirit of Islam, any more than in the exploits of that mythical personage, the Moslem warrior, with sword in one hand and the Koran in the other."

But it is to "fanatic zeal" and to "worldly motives" (the Rev. S. M. Zwemer) that the opponents of Islam seem determined always to look for an explanation of that marvellous inspiration which so united a number of scattered tribes of the desert and made of them world conquerors and rulers.

As for the fanatic spirit, I have shown how com-

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pletely it was disguised by the first Caliphs. As for worldly motives, let it be admitted at once that there is, through all the Moslem religion, a robust and practical acknowledgment of the necessity for man to live, by practical means; and a frank recognition of the value of wealth in the affairs of men. "Honest wealth is good for honest men," said the Prophet, and he always encouraged his followers to strive hard to gain it, while yet never ceasing to warn them of the limitations of its power. He believed, as the other prophets of old did, that those who served the Lord should "be fat and flourishing," and that it was their duty to go deliberately in quest of the bounties of God; but they were never to forget that God hath in reserve what is better than merchandise. They were to deal fairly even with their enemies. And they were to use their wealth for God; to shun ostentation; to care, before all things, for the orphan and the poor; and they were forbidden to gain wealth by usury (Note 11).

It was natural, I think, that when these desert warriors broke away from the bare and frugal land of their birth, and tasted the fruits of victory in such rich lands as Persia, Egypt, Africa, Spain, they should frankly admit, as Khalid did, "Even if we cared not to fight for the cause of God, yet we could not but wish to contend for and enjoy such lands as these, leaving distress and hunger henceforth for others."

Many writers have imagined that the Tribute (jezyah), which was exacted by the Moslem conquerors from those who preferred to pay a toll and keep their own religion, was for their own enrichment. Islam did not demand military service from men of other religions, and tribute was taken to pay for the protection

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and defence of those who could not fight themselves. If, however, Christians preferred to serve, they were exempt from the payment of tribute; if Moslems themselves wished exemption from military service *they* had to pay the tribute.

The spirit in which the tribute was exacted is shown by the treaty made by Khalid with some towns in the neighbourhood of Hirah—"If we protect you, then jezyah (tribute) is due to us; but if we do not, then it is not due" During the Caliph Omar's reign, when Syria had been conquered, the Emperor Heraclius raised an enormous army to drive back the Moslem forces. The General wrote to the people saying, "We give you back the money we took from you, as we have received news that a strong force is advancing against us. The agreement between us was that we should protect you, and as this is not in our power, we return you all that we took. But if we are victorious, we shall consider ourselves bound to you by the old terms of our agreement."

This act cost the Moslems enormous sums out of the State Treasury, at a time when the money was desperately wanted for war. These Syrian Christians said, "May God give the Moslems rule over us again, and make them victorious over the Romans; had it been they, they would not have given us back anything, but would have taken all we had."

In these modern days we hear much, from those Christian nations who possess the necessary Sword, of "open doors for trade," of "concessions," of "spheres of influence." The following statement of modern ideals I heard this year (January 1912) from the lips of a German lecturer, speaking, I imagine, with more

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than private authority: "No nation that can fight need starve. . . . Only a clear and practical arrangement over a real expansion for German colonisation and German trade with regard to British interests can produce an Anglo-German *entente*. . . . Otherwise, sooner or later, arms will have to decide whether Germany shall remain limited to Central Europe, or expand oversea according to her natural extension and real strength." The momentous words being spoken in a lecture at Shepheard's Hotel in Cairo, by Dr. Carl Peters on "Great Britain and the German Empire."

That is a candid statement, and to be preferred to the cant which hides material ambitions under hypocritical names, talking of taking "our proper part in extending the borders of civilisation," in carrying the religion of our fathers to benighted regions, and so on, of which too much is heard.

But along with the frankness of the desert warriors as to material ends there was always that passionate note of the missionary, aflame with his new-found zeal for the one God, sometimes even leading them to ignore or forget "the spoils of war" of which their later day enemies have made so much.

It was the despised Negro messenger to the Christian Cyrus in Old Cairo who said, "We live only to fight for God, and to follow His will. We care nought for wealth, so long as we have the wherewithal to stay our hunger, and to clothe our bodies. This world is nought to us, the next is all." And Cyrus saw enough of these people to convince him that they were a people of death, holding it gain to be killed and sent to Paradise, whereas the Romans loved the things of this life and

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clung to them. Such was the spirit in which the sword of Islam was wielded in those early days.

When the deplorable decadence of Islam set in, and more especially when this power was driven back upon itself by the growing strength of an awakened Christianity, which regarded it as "the enemy of God" and "anti-Christ," and the Eastern pride of its adherents was insulted and wounded in every part where it was most susceptible and tender, Islam began to meet suspicion and contempt with either a sullen reticence or a savage defiance.

With every loss of political power to Islam, there has been a further proud withdrawal into the mysterious regions of its religion, where it has sought to comfort and support itself, and to which alone access could be proudly denied to its enemies.

The people of the West have never been able to follow the working of the Eastern mind; though they have never failed to have ready a terse label to designate every movement with which it has to do.

Fanaticism; that is a comprehensive word to set at rest a hundred problems which without such a name would prove elusive and vexatious. It is easy, for instance, to dismiss as fanaticism a riot at Al Azar by students, annoyed with the "camera fiend," to those who can understand no religious scruples which might make photography repugnant, and in any case would not respect such scruples. And when the West is at a loss to explain the existence of a great fraternity of Moslems in the desert like the Senussi, whose aims and movements are otherwise inexplicable, then "fanaticism" affords again a grateful refuge.

And behind all this, there is evidently an obstinate

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and perverse determination, on the part of missionary writers especially, to cling to their own interpretation of the Jihād, or Holy War, an interpretation which Moslems themselves have repudiated over and over again. The Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall scarcely ever writes on the subject of Islam without asserting that "this obligation to persecute is still incumbent upon Moslems, and is faithfully observed even up to the present day in every country where Mohammedanism reigns supreme . . . and must ever be."

And this, in the face even of the declaration of such an impartial writer as Lane, who became convinced that his own first views were erroneous, and "must express my convictions that no precept is to be found in the Koran which, taken with the context, can justify unprovoked war."

T. W. Arnold asserts, "There are no passages to be found in the Koran that in any way enjoin forcible conversion, and many on the contrary that limit propagandist efforts to preaching and persuasion," quoting with approval the contention of a Moslem writer that no passages in the Koran authorise unprovoked attacks on unbelievers. The word Jihād was used before the Koran was written, and primarily bears no reference to war or fighting, much less to fighting against unbelievers, but derives its particular application from the context only.

Mr. Samuel M. Zwemer seems to be almost annoyed that Jihād is not "mentioned as a pillar of religion." It could then, of course, be used against Islam without fear of contradiction. Not that he is deterred, by this omission of the Prophet to add Jihād to the five pillars of religion, from declaring that Jihād "is a duty plainly

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taught by the Koran and by the Traditions." Indulging in a sneer at Arnold and Syed Ameer Ali for "interpreting these passages (in the Koran) in a semi-spiritual way. . . . They even try to make Jihād mean a sort of Christian Endeavour Society for propagating Islam!" And Mr. Zwemer appeals against such Orientalists to the opinion of the Rev. Marcus Dods!

Very different is this from the line taken by the missionary who recently wrote, "To lessen the shame of its terrible defeat Christendom has tried to persuade itself that this victory of Islam was won by the barbarous use of the sword, and that it is no proof of religious superiority. But it is time that we stopped deceiving ourselves. . . . It is not true that it was the sword that compelled the inhabitants (of conquered countries) to adopt the Faith of Islam" (Herr Missioninspektor K. Axenfeld).

As a great ulema said to me in Cairo, is it not strange if we may not interpret the Koran to suit the development and growth of the world? If you, as a Christian, quote a text from the Koran to show that I must of necessity be a bloodthirsty fanatic, and you refuse to consider the interpretations I put upon the Prophet's instructions, surely if I quote another Koranic text absolutely refuting you, you must be silent. I assert to you that the "striking off of heads" refers solely and alone to the stubborn idolaters who, in the Arabian Peninsula, refused to acknowledge God; because Mohammed believed, as a ruler, that "carnage is better than civil discord." When that discord was ended the people were commanded to have "no hostility save against the wicked" (Sura ii. 188-9).

"You will pardon me—the ulema continued—if I

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

THE MAGNIFICENT ARCADE OF NINTH CENTURY ARCHES IN THE RUINS OF THE MOSQUE OF IBN TOULOUN, CAIRO.

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remind you that Peter the Hermit (in 1098 A.D.) was sent as a Christian ambassador to the Turkish generals to offer them the choice of destruction, or conversion to the faith of Christ. As for cursing Christians in the mosque, let me assure you that the words used do not refer to either Christians or Jews, but to idolaters and enemies; no man with whom I would sit at meat is included in the curse. And as for compelling conversion at the point of the sword, it is a fiction of Western writers. "Wilt thou compel men to become believers? No soul can believe but by the permission of God," says the Holy Koran (Sura x. 99). "Summon thou to the way of thy Lord with wisdom and a kindly warning; dispute with them in the kindest manner" (Sura xvi. 126). One of the latest statements in the Koran is "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (Sura ii. 257).

And you know—said the ulema—the Koran speaks of Jesus as a Prophet, bringing His "Evangel with its guidance and light . . . a guidance and a warning to those who fear God" (Sura v. 50). To us the Koran is "confirmatory of previous scriptures. To every one a law and a way. If God had pleased he had surely made men of one religion; but He hath done otherwise, that He might try you in that which He hath severally given unto you; therefore be emulous and press forward in good works. To God shall ye return, and He will make clear that in which ye disagree" (Sura v. 52-3).

But why weary ourselves with quoting texts? this venerable theological scholar concluded. I beg you Christian critics of Islam to leave us to rise above any mere letter of the law, even if it is as you represent it, as Christendom very largely has risen above it. The

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letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive, are great words of your Book. I believe that no man would have been more ready to respond to the changing and developing conditions of life than the Prophet, with his knowledge of men, his practical wisdom, that spiritual insight and zeal, which placed him so immeasurably above his contemporaries. And as you well know (he said, addressing himself personally to me)—for you do not judge us without taking pains to understand us, and are not satisfied merely to study the things Western critics have said of us—the Prophet was in no sort himself a fanatic. A hundred personal details of his life prove this—to mention only one, he had a Jew as his secretary for many years. Do you know that when the Moslems conquered Persia their toleration extended even to the fire-worshippers? A Moslem general there ordered an Imām to be flogged because he had destroyed a fire-temple in Sughd and built a mosque in its place.

We Christians may well ask ourselves if we are for ever to regard it as our first duty to discourage the men of this faith, who want to help forward the millions of the Moslem world by leading them back to the simpler and purer teaching of their early days. When they turn to their scripture for help in restoring the days of a pure religious fervour, with its fine principles of toleration, and its encouragement of the pursuit of learning, is it the Christian critic who is to be the one to search for detached texts and to try to make of them insuperable obstacles and unbreakable bonds? I am glad to think that there are not wanting signs that the failure of such methods of commending to the Islamic world the message of the Gospel of Christ is being more and more recognised.

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CHAPTER IV

OF FATALISM

"God turned unto Adam, for He loveth to turn—for He is easy to be reconciled and merciful" (Sura ii. 35).

I SUPPOSE that from no religion known to man has the element of fatalism been entirely absent, and as different phases of thought have asserted themselves, the doctrine of predestination has in turn taken its place to the eclipse for the time being of other views of God's dealings with humanity. So recently did such views reassert themselves in England—for St. Augustine had brought them there at an earlier date—that I believe an examination of the trust deeds of a great number of nonconformist places of worship would lead to either a revival of Calvinism or to the closing of their doors, if our principles of adaptability to changing theological conditions were overridden and exact law were enforced.

One of the first attacks made upon Islam is generally founded upon "the deadening influence of their doctrine of fatalism." Upon this doctrine, Mr. Zwemer (from whom I quote) and Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall pile every detail of tradition and history in their determination to strengthen the indictment. It is the keystone in the arch of the Moslem faith: it is the only philosophy of Islam. God wills both good and evil; there is no escaping from the caprice of His decree. Fatalism has

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paralysed progress. Hope perishes under the weight of this iron bondage; injustice and social decay are stoically accepted; no man bears the burden of another. An archangel and a murderer, a devil and a gnat equally execute the will and purpose of Allah every moment of their existence. In this way the awful indictment is piled up. The Pen of God has written of all that was to take place, until the Resurrection Day, "even to the amount of the movement of the leaf of a tree as it rises and falls."

I marvel that any writer on Islam will commit himself to the statement that no man bears another's burden—the charity, the self-denial, the faithfulness to natural obligations, the daily personal ministrations of these people to each other, of which there is abundant witness, and which I have seen in a thousand ways, give the lie to such a charge. The teaching and example of the Prophet, the thousand exhortations of the Koran to care for the orphan and the poor, to treat the slave as a member of the family and to make his redemption easy, these things cry out at every turn against the libel.

And history surely confutes the statement that there is fatalism hard enough and dominating enough in Islam to make advance impossible. Is there any doubt that it was in the fervour of their first passion for Islam that the tribesmen and tent dwellers of Arabia conquered the world from Delhi to Granada, accomplishing more in one century than the great Empire of Rome had done in seven. The fact is it is no more possible to find a simple formula like this of fatalism—or *Kismet*, the word so popular at present—to account for the decadence and stagnation of Islam, and to declare its

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incapacity for revival, than in the Christian religion can be found a single doctrine that will account for the awful decadence of the Dark Ages from which it has triumphantly emerged into the light of the present day. And it is worth remembering that the days of Calvinism in England coincide with a very vigorous period of our history; and that some of the most energetic and enterprising of the pioneers of our modern commercial success belonged to the sects holding these views.

I believe that the heart of Islam is hidden from men who can write in this way. They have studied Islam, I know, and have become learned in the study, almost to portentiousness. It was a Moslem philosopher, Bishr ibn al-Harith, a holy man of Bagdad, who said: "The punishment of the learned man in this life is blindness of heart." Unconsciously, surely, such critics, who wish to be regarded as the friends and not the opponents of Islam, are perpetuating errors which were viciously propagated by the bitterest of enemies. It was Pope Pius II. who, in his letter to the Emperor of the Turks, said: "Mohammed thinks that all things happen in this earth fortuitously, and that God does not regard them." An inspired statement from which grew up the belief that Mohammed denied the Providence of God.

History, both ancient and modern, teaches that the last thing to be expected is that any religion will be understood by its adversaries, but that rather it will be loaded with unjust calumnies; and the followers of Islam of all religions suffers most from such a tendency to this day, largely from their dislike of disputes about their religion, and from their indifference in commending it to any man who opposes it.

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There are certain early vicious ideas of Mohammed bearing upon this point which it is a shame almost to mention, but which persist in a strange way with people whose intelligence should make such nonsense impossible of survival. The Prophet, says one story, accustomed a pigeon to eat peas out of his ear, and pretended that it was the Holy Ghost; another, that he commanded men to worship Venus, denied hell, taught that women had no souls, and bade men worship him.

It was in the region of these ideas that unscrupulous adversaries said the Prophet taught that God was corporeal, and did not regard human affairs, and was the author of all evil. "God is Mohammed's servant, for both He and His angels pray for Mohammed," asserted Cardinal Nicolaus de Cufa, and on this was founded what was for very long considered a most crushing indictment. In the present day the author of *The Reproach of Islam* can say, "To deny Mohammed was ever to Mohammed an even more unforgivable offence than to deny Allah" (p. 64).

There was an abominable Latin version of the Koran by Reteneuf and Hermon Dalmata (1550) which rendered a verse, "God and the angels pray for the Prophet," while in truth it was merely the Arabian way of saying, as men do to this day, "On him be blessings and peace" (Sura xxxiii. 56). "Verily God and His angels bless the Prophet: Bless ye him, O believers, and salute Him with salutations of peace." Bradwardin, a great Christian theologian, charged Moslems with devil worship, "Is it not contained in your Koran that the sun rises between the two horns of the Devil, and therefore those who worship towards the East worship the Devil." Then it was asserted that

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in this religion the devils are the friends of God, founded on ignorance of the fact that the genii (some of whom heard the Koran read, and approved the doctrine contained in it) are neither devils nor related to them (Sura lxxii.).

A cursory glance shows that the same methods of criticism have been used towards other religions. The Jewish people, though they had the holiest institutions and laws, could not escape the calumny of opponents, who charged them with many things which were absolutely false. Tacitus himself, who did not lack opportunities of consulting the Jews, wrote that they were expelled from Egypt for the scab, and that they consecrated the image of an ass which had taught them to overcome their thirst and cease from their wanderings. Plutarch maliciously related that a sow was honoured among the Jews as their teacher in sowing and tilling, and that the Feast of Tabernacles was celebrated in honour of Bacchus, that the very Sabbath was consecrated to that divinity. Rutilius sneered at the Jewish Sabbaths as "cold sabbaths" (Ex. xxxv. 3), with other jests about their laws.

And when Christianity arose, what a hideous travesty of it was created by the Jews. The God of the Christians was hoofed like an ass; they feasted those who were to be initiated on a young child covered over with flour; they threatened the early destruction of the whole world with fire; after they had ended their most solemn Feasts they put out the lights and men and women embraced one another as chance guided —a sort of calumny which is always introduced under such conditions.

To sum up in the words of Tertullian, in his apology

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—" the Christians were counted murderers, incestuous, sacrilegious, public enemies of mankind, guilty of all wickedness, and therefore enemies of the Gods, of Emperors, of morality, and of Universal Nature; so that it was a sufficient crime to be reckoned a Christian, and that very name made them guilty."

It is true that Pliny after having inquired into the Christian religion gave a very different account of it to the Emperor Trajan. There were others, too, who did not so foully misrepresent the Christians, but these were few in number compared with those who defamed the Christian faith.

Just as time has put these charges in their proper place, so I believe the popular errors about Islam will in the face of a just and sympathetic study fall away. But this study must be one of the living people, and not of the misleading accounts of them and of their beliefs which have been handed down and elaborated from age to age, often with the intention of making blacker the original accusations against them.

And what do the leaders of Islam, and what does the actual experience of its followers, say on this subject of Fatalism? A leading sheikh with whom I often discussed this matter said—and this with an air of sadness with which he always approached any controversy between the two religions—that there was no more warrant for this charge against his religion than there was against mine. The Koran does say, " Whom God directs he is led into the right way; whom He leads into error he is deserted," and that " nothing can befall us but what God hath prepared for us" (Sura ix, 51). But—and he turned to a well-thumbed Bible on his table—can you explain these words, " I make

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peace and create evil" (Isa. xlv. 7). "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it" (Amos iii. 6). How many times does your Book tell of men being caused to wander from the right way of salvation, "for the Lord thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate" (Deut. ii. 30). And your Apostle Paul, does he not speak of the Potter who shall have power over the lump to make "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction" (Rom. ix. 22).

"By why continue this setting of text against text," said the sheikh. "No religion could live that was bound eternally by odd passages of its Holy Book, and lacked that spirit which can expand with the growing needs of men. Of this I am certain; if the Christian religion has found it possible to throw off such shackles of Fatalism as those which might have still bound it, if it had detached, say, the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans from its great scheme for the help and salvation of mankind, Islam can also break the slighter shackles which her enemies so persistently enlarge upon. But let us—and this with a kindly smile—talk of other things." Reminding me of another gentle old sheikh who ended a similar discussion by saying, "But why dispute; tell me your excellent names of God, and I will tell you mine!"

The Moslem rosary, I may remark, has a hundred beads, and pious men and women tell over the ninety-nine "excellent names of God," the largest bead being for the name of Allah. The Prophet said it was "a good thing to keep the mouth always moist with the praise of God." These names in themselves are almost enough to refute the charge of fatalism. They are ranged in three sections, divided in the rosary, (i) the attributes

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of wisdom; (ii) of power; (iii) of goodness. The rosary is called *Thirka*, or remembrance.

The matter was stated in this way by another Moslem: We always extol the holiness of God, and charge no defect to Him. We say that God directs evil, in His providence, but does not please Himself in it; we never pronounce Him the author of evil. We are unjustly charged with this opinion, with which all who maintain the absolute providence of God and His independent right in all things, are wont to be charged, as indeed Christians have been.

Said another sheikh: You know that our Prophet—on whom be blessings and peace—was, of all things, most certain that even his entrance to Paradise depended on the *mercy* of God, which cannot be reconciled with any form of predestination. One of our chief prayers is that for Guidance in making a good choice, a prayer enjoined by Mohammed in his own words; it acknowledges the omniscience of God, and goes on—"I pray Thee to be gracious to me, for Thou art mighty, and I am helpless . . . give me what is good for me, and let me be content with it." If this is fatalism, it is a greatly modified form of it.

A Moslem friend of mine, educated in England, and himself a man of character and vigour, told me of the deep impression made upon his mind by a sermon he heard, in a Christian church, on the text "Take no thought for the morrow . . . for your Heavenly Father knoweth ye have need." "That," he said, "I suggest with deference, is the sort of fatalism that *you* preach but the Oriental really practises. The thought of the strenuous nations, so intent, not alone on the supply of their daily needs, but of provision for the proverbial

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Photo] THE HOUSE TOMBS UNDER THE CITADEL, CAIRO. [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

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rainy day, of which they live in constant anticipation and dread, and with their struggles for what they call a "competency," these are not the people who sensibly consider the lilies of the field, which neither toil nor spin, and yet are clothed in beauty.

Casual observers do the Arab people injustice in reporting that the constant use of the word "ma'alesh" is a proof of fatalism. It has many meanings, even to being used as the courteous word of apology if a man accidentally stumbles, for instance, against another.

The fact is, that what is often mistaken for the apathy of the fatalist in the East, is a remarkable degree of resignation and fortitude. "Verily to God we belong; and verily to Him we return!" are the heartfelt words which spring with childlike faith and simplicity to the Moslem's lips in the face of the tragedies of life, and which underlie the constant use of that word "ma'alesh"—do not think of it—with which the Moslem encourages serenity of mind in the smaller, as in the greater, vexations and disappointments of life.

But how misleading to the casual observer the outward air of stoicism may be; I have been with these Eastern men in times of deepest sorrow, and I have seen the heart wrung, and the bitter tears flow while they still stammered in answer to inquiries, "Praise be to God! Our Lord is bountiful!" I was witness to a scene of grief so poignant and so passionate, in the privacy of one of the house-tombs under the Citadel at Cairo, to which only intimate friendship admitted me, that the memory of it haunts me still. And yet with sobs one of my friends said to me in effect, "Never mind!—Ma'alesh! It is God's will. God's will be done!"

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It is for the same reasons that the Moslem is "utterly devoid of presumption with regard to his future actions, or to any future events," always adding, "If it be the will of God" to any statement of future plans; or "God is all-knowing," when speaking of a past event of which he is not certain.

It was Yusef, the sheikh at Luxor, who reproved a poor Moslem who said, when his elder child had small-pox, it was *min Allah* (from God), and neglected to at once have his baby vaccinated. "Oh, man, when thou wouldst build a house, dost thou throw the bricks in a heap, and say the building thereof is from God, or dost thou use the brains and hands which God has given thee, and then pray Him to bless thy work? In all things do the best of thy understanding and means, and then say *min Allah*, for the end is with Him."

The Prophet once asked a disciple who wished to argue the question of Free Will, "If the wall against which I am sitting were to show signs of falling, shall I sit on and say *Allah kereem*, or should I use the legs God has given me to escape?" The true Moslem doctrine is "Do all you can, and be resigned to whatever is the result." As the Arabic proverb has it—"Trust in God, but tether your camel!" But such discussions, when his disciples

> "Reasoned high
> Of Providence, fore-knowledge, will and fate,—
> Fired fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute—
> And found no end, in wandering mazes lost,"

Mohammed discouraged as profitless, and he eventually forbade them.

It is an invidious thing, as I have before remarked, to criticise a book which has become so deservedly a

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classic for all time, but even Lane can sometimes, in doctrinal matters, misrepresent the people of whom he made such a penetrating study. I think he is quite wrong in attributing to the Moslems such a degree of belief in predestination that they make no effort at the conversion of unbelievers—"The number of the faithful is decreed by God; and no act of man can increase or diminish it." All modern history is against this statement. The enormous spread of Islam, especially in pagan lands (the testimony of Miss Mary Kingsley, as one amongst many travellers in Central Africa, is very striking), through the fact that "every Moslem is a missionary," is causing the greatest anxiety and reproach in Christian missionary circles. Although Lane clothed himself and lived in every way as an Egyptian, no doubt most of his associates knew that he was a Christian—or at any rate a doubtful Moslem—which would in any case make them reticent in matters of religion.

That is a remarkable passage in the Koran, "He who saveth a soul alive, shall be as if he had saved the lives of all mankind" (Sura v. 36; Sale's translation), an excellent text for a missionary sermon, if these people allowed themselves the use of detached words for such a purpose. A college for the definite training of missionaries has recently been started in Cairo under the highest auspices, the aims of which I have had the opportunity of studying, as explained to me by the learned sheikh who has charge of the work, and who, since I saw him, has been as far as India to help forward a similar missionary movement there. Not the slightest suggestion of predestination has ever arisen to impede this work, which has been universally supported by

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approval and by generous subscriptions. Any one interested in the training of Christian missionaries might do well to study the documents in which the aims and methods of this Moslem College are set forth. They were unreservedly placed in my hands, and I possess an English translation.

Deutsch and Renan have pointed out that the Koran does not clearly determine the question as to how far men are free agents, acting on their own initiative, and how far their action is constrained by Allah; in fact, they say, it speaks in popular language, sometimes ascribing all action to Allah, and sometimes to men's own agency. How many Christian writers have said practically the same thing of the Bible. Canon Mozley, in his *Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, certainly uses very similar words.

And just as in the Bible there are stirring calls innumerable to a vigorous pursuit of personal righteousness, so in the Koran, Mohammed gives, over and over again, injunctions which show as indisputably as can be, that nothing was further from his mind than a pious state of idle and hopeless inanity and stagnation. The rich recompense is to the strenuous and not to those who sit at home at ease (Sura iv. 97): a teaching which was repeated, and put into its noblest practice, by all Mohammed's early followers; which Ali signalised in that passionate call to effort—"I marvel that any man of you can be slothful, seeing that death pursues him!"

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CHAPTER V

WHAT THE MOSLEMS THINK OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

"It was barren in winter, 'tis barren in spring,
And barren man's heart is, till grace intervene,
And, crushing it, clothe the long barren with green.
When the fresh breath of Jesus shall touch the heart's core,
It will live, it will breathe, it will blossom once more."
Jalaluddin Rumi (the Moslem thirteenth-century poet).

IT has, I think, never been realised what a thrill of horror ran through the educated Islamic East at the report, given in the *Times* of 28th September 1911, that the Bishop of London had declared that Islam "denies and casts out the name of Christ as evil."

This was in a speech in the Albert Hall, London, at the public valedictory meeting of the Church Missionary Society. The Bishop was at once criticised by such men as Professor Margoliouth, who, though in many ways an adverse critic of Islam, yet knew how unjustifiable such a charge as this was. The Bishop's answer was that he was summarising the following passage from *The Reproach of Islam*, by the Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner. "Point by point each truth of Christianity, steeped through with the tenderness of the love of God, is negated with abhorrence by Islam; the Fatherhood of God; the Sonship and Incarnation of Jesus Christ; the Divinity of the Holy Ghost; the death of Christ and all that it means, whether ethically—of love, infinite tenderness, infinite self-sacrifice; or spiritually—of sin condemned and sin

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forgiven; the Resurrection of Christ on the third day; His glorification with the Father with the glory which he had with Him before the world was,—each several truth of these truths is a blasphemy in the eyes of every Moslem, a lie which Islam came expressly to blast, taught by a book which the Koran came expressly to replace" (p. 312).

Being in Cairo at the time, I was in a position, from my intimacy with the leading men of the Islamic world there, to know how deeply they were distressed as well as astonished by such a charge. As the object of my stay in Egypt was to give, as far as I could, the Moslems a chance of stating for themselves their religious tenets and opinions, I took every opportunity, not only of questioning the chief sheikhs, from the sheikh Al Azar downwards, but of eliciting the views of the average layman, as to the position held by the Lord Jesus Christ in their religion.

Put in simple language, freed from religious sophistry, and detached from a great mass of traditional lore which gathered at a later date about the subject, the belief of Islam about our Lord is, that he was born of the Virgin Mary, conceived by an act of Divine Will (Sura iii. 52), coming to the world as the Spirit of God and the Word of Truth (Sura iv. 69). "To Jesus, Son of Mary, gave we clear proofs of His mission, and strengthened Him by the Holy Spirit" (Sura ii. 81).

But that God had a Son they do not, of course, believe; "He begetteth not, neither is He begotten" (Sura cxii.) is the first article of their faith—"there is but one God." Nevertheless the Moslems have a profound admiration for the life of Jesus, of which, to my knowledge, many of them read, in the Gospels.

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I have heard a thoughtful Moslem say (I do not suggest that this is general) that he felt esteem for "our Lord Jesus, on whom be blessings and peace," when he thought of His pure and gentle life and example, above that which he felt for the Prophet, whom all Moslems so deeply venerate. It was to confirm the former Prophets, he said, and to add to their "books," that Mohammed was appointed.

No charge is more common than to say that the Moslems despise the Gospel, declaring that it has been corrupted by Christians. But their contention is (I found this again and again) that the scriptures have been misinterpreted and misunderstood rather than corrupted. The general belief of the authorities is that expressed by Ibn Abbas, who said, "there is no man who could corrupt a single word of what proceeded from God." The words of God must stand, but their meaning could be misrepresented. And even Mr. Zwemer admits that "thousands of Mohammedans now, however, say the Bible is not corrupted, and read it willingly and gladly."

The sheikh Al Azar was specially anxious that I should see the copy of the Psalms which is in the University Library, and is constantly read by students. He reminded me that the Psalms are mentioned twice in the Koran, once with a quotation—"My servants, the righteous, shall inherit the earth" (Sura xxi. 105).

Next to Mohammed, Jesus is the greatest of all the Prophets; the one sinless Prophet of Islam, alone of all those mentioned in the Koran, as free from guilt. Mohammed acknowledges his own unrighteousness in many passages. To Jesus are attributed the power to perform miracles, while Mohammed distinctly re-

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pudiated the suggestion that he himself possessed such power, declaring again and again to his followers, "I am only a man like you" (Sura xli. 5). "Mohammed is no more than an apostle" (Sura iii. 138). "Guidance is not with Mohammed, but with God" (Sura ii. 274). The exact terms of reverence which always preface the mention of the name of the Prophet are used when the name of Jesus is spoken, and the Mother of Jesus is always called "Our Mistress Mary."

It is useless, I suppose, to speculate what might have been the development of Islam if Mohammed had been acquainted with a pure Christianity, instead of the corrupt travesty of it, which was known in Arabia in his time. The Christians of that day were, as Professor Palmer puts it, forgetful alike of the old revelation and of the new, and, neglecting the teachings of their master, were split up into numerous sects—"Homoousians and Homoiousians, Monothelites and Monophysites, Jacobites and Eutychians," and the like, who had little in common but the name of Christian and the bitter hatred with which they regarded each other.

The misconception of the Christian doctrine of the Trinity which was prevalent in Arabia, and the only one with which Mohammed was acquainted, was that it meant nothing more nor less than tritheism, and these three were God the Father, the Virgin-Mother, and the Son of God.

The apostasy constantly urged by Mohammed against the Jews is their rejection of Jesus; and the Moslems maintain that those who believe in Jesus, both Moslems and Christians, must for ever prevail against the Jews, both in argument and in arms. It is because of this,

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says Al Beidawi, that the Jews to this very day have never overcome the Christians or Moslems, having no kingdom or established government of their own.

The Moslems do not believe in the death of Jesus upon the Cross: "They crucified Him not, but another who was made to appear to them like Him . . . God took Jesus up to Himself" (Sura iv. 156). But they further maintain, with the Christians, that Jesus is their promised Messiah. As the learned sheikh Rashid Rida (editor of the review *Al-Manar*) put it to me, after he had spoken of the deep reverence all Moslems have for Christ—"It is universally held that Jesus—on whom be blessings and peace—will come again forty-five years before the end of the world, and will restore peace and harmony in the earth, even to the extent of reconciling men and the wild beasts,—the lion shall lie down with the lamb, and the serpent shall be the playmate of children. By the side of our Prophet's grave in Medina, the most sacred spot we have, a place is reserved for the burial of Jesus, when he eventually dies, as we think he will, before the Day of Judgment. I am, as you know, a follower of the rational views of the late sheikh Mohammed Abdu, and I believe, as many Moslems do, that it is the spirit of Jesus which will at the latter end pervade the whole earth and bring the blessings spoken of in the Bible."

"How could the Bishop of London," he asked me, "have been so misled as to say that Islam casts out the name of Christ as evil? Was it not significant," he asked, "that it was from the writings of a missionary that the Bishop got his ideas? This same missionary," continued the sheikh, "said that even the little Arab boy, in the utter hatred of the faith of Christ, is taught to

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defile the Cross which he has drawn in the sand! Where did Mr. Gairdner learn of such a thing? Has he merely echoed it from that other critic of Islam who stops at little in his efforts to defame it—Samuel M. Zwemer? (The defiling of the Cross was first mentioned in *Islam: a Challenge to Faith.*) Speaking generally, Moslems are as little affected by any dislike of the sign of the Cross as Christians are by that of the Crescent."

I can speak from personal knowledge of the fact that in Tunisia the special tattoo mark on the face is a small cross on one of the temples, and by this a Tunisian can be invariably recognised in any part of the world. Some of the nomad tribes of the Sahara use the cross as a decoration for their stuffs and their weapons. Leo Africanus recorded that in his day all the mountaineers of Algeria and Bougia, though Moslems, painted black crosses on their cheeks and the palms of the hands (*Ramusio*, p. 61).

General Gordon knew the Moslem people perhaps as well as any man has ever done—not the people of the city merely, but of the almost inaccessible parts of the Sudan as well as of China. When he was writing his last diary at Khartoum he was surrounded by men who could by no means have shown their religion at its best; he was there to oppose one of the most fanatical and successful risings of barbarian tribes of recent times, led by a man who claimed to be the Madhi expected of Islam. But the following passage should be pondered by all those who honestly desire to understand the people of this faith, and who might by virtue of their office be concerned to encourage and stimulate them, rather than to criticise and condemn. This is what Gordon wrote:—

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"I am sure it is unknown to the generality of our missionaries in Moslem countries, that, in the Koran, no imputation of sin is made to our Lord; neither is it hinted that He had need of pardon; and, further, no Moslem can deny that the Father of our Lord was God (*vide* chapter of the Koran) and that He was incarnated by a miracle. Our bishops content themselves with its being a false religion, but it is a false religion possessed by millions on millions of our fellow-creatures. The Moslems do not say that Mohammed was without sin; the Koran often acknowledged that he erred, but no Moslem will say 'Jesus sinned.' As far as self-sacrifice of the body, they are far above the Roman Catholics, and consequently above Protestants . . . the God of the Moslems is our God." (Entry made in the diary on 12th September 1884.)

How different a temper is this from that exhibited in the writings of such a man as the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall, in his anxiety to miss no opportunity of confirming the unsympathetic and antagonistic views of Islam which seem to be so acceptable to English readers. This missionary gentleman immediately wrote not only to partly confirm the Bishop of London's original statement, but to produce a mass of the absurd legends and traditions which gathered round this subject in the earlier days of Islam. Puerilities which, it might be allowed, are no more to be laid at the door of true Moslems, than Protestant Christians are to be held accountable for the fabulous legends of the "Fathers of the Church" and of the Christian mystics, which gathered about the pure faith of Christ.

It was in the same number of the *Church Missionary Review* (November 1911) which contained the Bishop's

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speech, and his explanation, that this writer gathered a mass of this nonsense with apparently no object but to prove that the Moslems have no true knowledge of Jesus, but are irrevocably committed to a hideous travesty of Him. And in drawing the caricature which he presents, he considers himself justified in quoting from the mass of Moslem traditions, good and bad, with little or no regard to the degree of credence they obtain from intelligent Moslems themselves. He forgets entirely that these fables concerning the life and miracles of our Lord are seldom or never of Mohammedan invention, but may generally be traced to the Apocryphal Gospels and other spurious remains of Christian antiquity. And he seems quite oblivious to the consideration that such treatment on the part of a Christian, instead of opening the way for a more exalted teaching of the mission of our Lord's life and death, has the effect of exciting an antagonism in the Moslem mind which diminishes—if it does not entirely close the door to—the appeal which might be founded on a mutual reverence for Him.

The enlightened Moslem rejects the greater part of these fables and traditions, being so far in agreement with Mr. Tisdâll as to call them "a mass of rubbish." As a matter of fact, every impartial historian should bring to these traditional records of the Prophet's sayings and doings the patient care with which all such documents are treated if they are to yield the precious information they hold, and not to be made mere vulgar weapons of offence.

His article was translated and submitted to several learned sheikhs—for there is a large committee in Cairo which regularly considers the criticisms of Islam in

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the European and American press. Almost every tradition on which Mr. Tisdall has drawn for his picture of the Moslem Jesus is in the category of those regarded as doubtful. The late Grand Mufti (chief religious judge) of Egypt, pronounced them to be "untrue." Bitter indignation was expressed that such writers as this leave out all the more spiritual details of the Moslem beliefs, in which they agree with the Christians, while they exaggerate every mean detail which has crept into the Oriental imaginative writing, and that they always seek to engender prejudice in the Western mind by the statement (made by Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall even in this article on Jesus) that Moslems are still "bound (when strong enough) to oppose the followers of Jesus with the sword, fighting in the Way of God (the Jīhād) until all Christians are slain, or have been compelled to accept Islam, or have paid tribute out of hand and are brought low." Which statement of the Jīhād many Moslems declared to me to be perverse and misleading, in the face of the facts which have often been explained. I deal with the Jīhād in another place.

One of the Al Azar sheikhs expressed the greatest indignation at the tone of all the writings on Islam by Mr. Tisdall. He asked me what could be said of a man who, in dealing with the early sufferings of Mohammed before he was convinced of his mission, sneers at what even Muir admits were the genuine strivings after Truth. The Prophet used to retire to the hills—to a spot described to me by a pilgrim who had visited it as one of awful bareness and loneliness—"to seek relief in meditation and prayer," which this critic takes upon himself, for the first time, to say was but taking

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himself to the mountains for a month's change of air and scene (*Religion of the Crescent*, p. 146).

As I was desirous of finding what is the authoritative rule in the acceptance of these traditions of Islam, I took the opportunity of discussing it with all the ulema of Al Azar University, and other authorities. The kernel of the question is the saying of the Prophet himself to Moaz ibn Gebel, who was sent to Yemen by Mohammed as a religious judge.

"By what rules are you going to judge amongst the people?" asked the Prophet, to test him.

"First, by the Book of God; second, by the Traditions of the Prophet," he replied.

"But," questioned the Prophet, "if the matter is not found in the Book of God, or in the Traditions?"

"Then," he said, "I will try to make a just judgment according to reason."

An answer which pleased the Prophet. It was thus early settled that the first rule is to consult the Koran; the second, Tradition; then those decisions on which the great Imāms are agreed; and then Precedent. The Prophet said that no one was obliged to regard a Tradition which did not agree with the Koran.

One of the four great Imāms of Islam, Abu Hanifa (767 A.D.), laid down this law, to which the other chief Imāms agreed. "We select first from the Koran, then from the Traditions, then from the decrees of the companions of the Prophet. What the companions agreed upon has great weight with us; and where they doubt, we doubt." The Grand Mufti still considers this a good rule.

As the modern reformers say, the religion of Islam began by being very simple, for in the first century of

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the Hijrah all the religious knowledge the believers possessed consisted of the Koran, and the necessary explanations which had been given by Mohammed. One seems to see an exact counterpart of the course of early Christianity in the fact that when theological schools were developed—at one time one hundred and twenty learned professors were lecturing at Bagdad on dogmatical and legal subjects—the teaching of a spiritual religion and an inward piety was almost forgotten.

In one of the latest books on Islam, written by an educated Moslem, the author, Mohammed Badr, says, "When in any case tradition and the intellectual appreciation of a matter clash, then is tradition to be put aside and the individual opinion followed." I referred his passage to some of the ulema, however, and they thought the freedom claimed was too great for safety. When there is such a conflict between reason and tradition, they agreed, the Moslem should seek the advice of some learned man who is versed in the teachings of the great Imams, before finally judging; otherwise every man would be a law unto himself, and the ignorant would do much harm. In this as in every other matter, however, they are forbidden by the Holy Koran to interfere with the consciences of men; or to put any obstacle in the way of reasonable private judgment.

There is in Cairo a school—allied to Al Azar—for the training of Cadis—or religious judges; to my mind, one of the most interesting institutions in Egypt, where the best modern methods of education are being added to the religious teaching first gained at Al Azar itself, under an educated and enlightened sheikh who was trained in England. A general rule of interpretation

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for these students is that, while the Koran is the fundamental part of the law, the tribunals must study to reconcile equity and reason, rather than follow a pedantic or patristic line.

Such is the affection and reverence for our Lord Jesus, that I think it should be the desire of every man who goes to the Moslems with the Christian message, to encourage it, and, while refraining from saying a single word which can wound them in relation to a matter so sacred to them, seek quiet ways of developing their knowledge of that one Perfect Life.

Of all men we Christians are the last who should seek to stereotype for them the mass of tradition, whenever we see a disposition on their part to free themselves from it; or to sneer at the reformers as "unorthodox" who so ardently desire to bring about a moral revival. What does not Protestant England and America owe to reformers whom the Church would have suppressed for their unorthodoxy?

It is a deeply significant thing that one of the old Deys of Algiers, in an audience he gave to a Jesuit priest who was seeking the redemption of slaves, showed him a copy of *The Imitation of Christ* printed in the Turkish language, adding that "he valued it more than the Koran." In the reign of Solyman I. a chief of the ulemas, Sheikh Cabiz, suffered martyrdom rather than renounce his predilection for the Gospel.

In Egypt, my wife and I, in calling one day on an enlightened Moslem friend, whose family we knew quite well, were both admitted to the hareem, by the mother's permission, as a special mark of confidence in me. One of the daughters was engaged on some remark-

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able embroidery. Our surprise and pleasure may be imagined, when we found that the subject of one beautiful piece of work was a picture of the Good Shepherd, drawn by herself after reading the story in the New Testament, which had greatly impressed her.

The incident brought to my mind an anecdote, related by Hottinger, of a Bohemian Jew who actually became a convert to Christianity in consequence of convictions awakened in his mind by Moslem teachers, during a long captivity with the Turks.

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CHAPTER VI

BELIEFS AS TO THE EQUALITY AND BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

"Islam taught the people sobriety, temperance, charity, justice and equality as the commandments of God. Its affirmation of the principle of equality of man and man and its almost socialistic tendency represented the same phase of thought that had found expression on the shores of Galilee."

Ameer Ali Syed, M.A., *The Spirit of Islam*, p. 160.

"TAKE away that black man!" exclaimed the Christian Archbishop Cyrus, "I can have no discussion with him!" when the Arab conquerors had sent a deputation of their ablest men to discuss terms of surrender of the capital of Egypt, headed by the negro Ubâdah, as the ablest of them all.

To the scared archbishop's astonishment, he was told that this man was commissioned by the General Amr; that the Moslems held negroes and white men in equal respect—judging a man by his character and not by his colour.

"Well, if the negro must lead, he must speak gently," ordered the prelate, so as not to frighten his white auditors.

The reply of the negro shows the spirit of those early conquerors.

"There are a thousand blacks, as black as myself, amongst our companions. I and they would be ready each to meet and fight a hundred enemies together. We live only to fight for God, and to follow His will. We care naught for wealth, so long as we have where-

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withal to stay our hunger and to clothe our bodies. This world is naught to us, the next world is all!"

The spirit of the Christian Cyrus prevails to this day. Quite recently I heard an English officer dismiss a Cairo cabman who had responded to the Turf Club call, saying indignantly to his friend and to the porter, "Why, he's a black beggar." A very few years since a number of students of Edinburgh University refused the regular invitation of a Professor to tea on Sunday afternoon, if another student were included—merely because he was a Negro. It is pleasant to record that the Professor stood by his dusky friend, gaining for him, eventually, equality of social treatment. The fact should not be lost sight of that only one in eight of the people of the British Empire are white.

It is certainly to the East that one must come to understand absolute equality—a principle, however, which I fear the English people are especially incapable of understanding, under any circumstances. The nature of the gulf which is made to separate the people of the Orient from Europeans is never realised or understood by Moslems, and I believe that to this cause is due the greater part of the personal misunderstanding which makes our rule so difficult in Egypt. As for the gulf which snobbery and class distinction make to separate English people from each other, this is still more incomprehensible to the Oriental mind.

I have talked with a sheikh of pure Arab descent, now holding a very dignified position in Cairo, a man of great learning in the history and religion of Islam, who has with much gentleness asked me to explain our Christian principles in the matter of brotherhood, as he could in no way understand them from what he

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saw of the Englishmen in Egypt and the Sudan, as compared with the teaching of the New Testament.

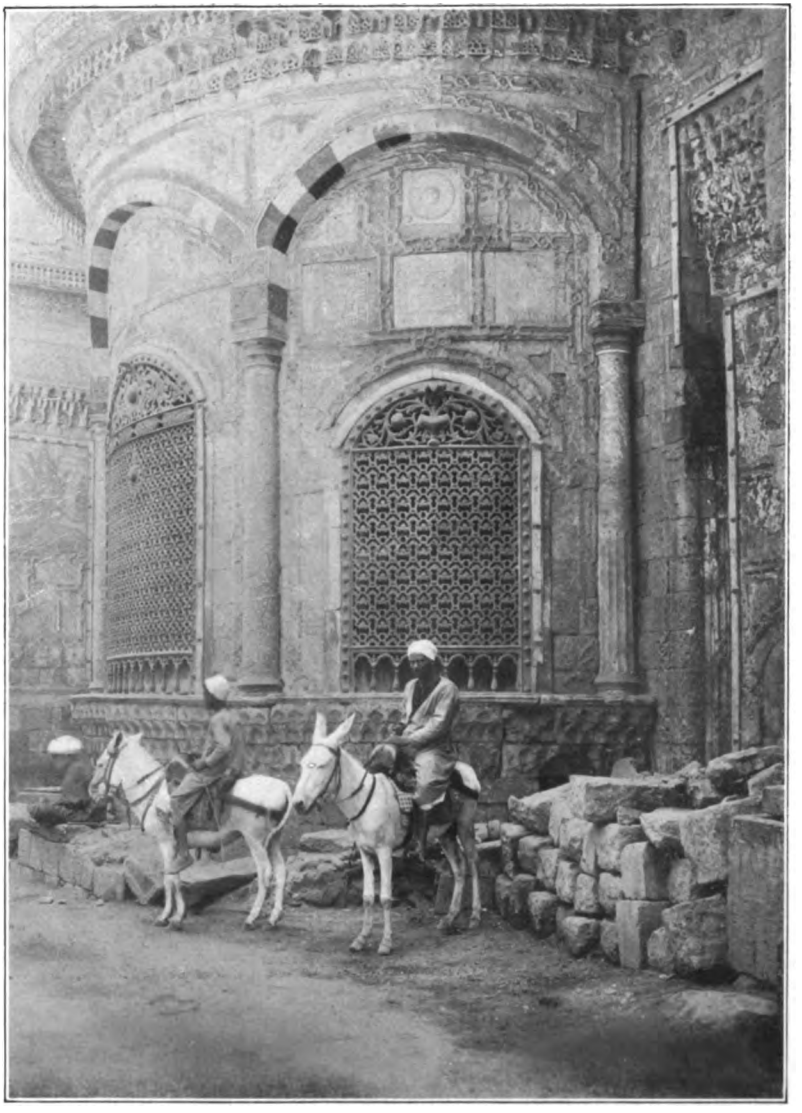
This story was told me of this very gentleman—he did not tell it himself, or refer to it—but it came from a mutual friend. When the sheikh was occupying a chief position in the Sudan, as a Cadi, he had occasion to travel from Khartoum to Cairo by rail. Having a first-class ticket, he was sitting in one of the open saloons which are the rule of the Sudan State Railway, when an Englishman of the monocled type entered. After staring rudely, he rang the bell, and informed the guard that he objected to travelling with "a native."

Gentlemen of the sheikh class, it should be explained, always wear the turban and long robes of the East. The sheikh, when asked to leave the saloon for his private apartment (set apart for sleeping and useable by day), refused; he had a ticket entitling him to travel in this part of the train. The Englishman now became angry, and doggedly insistent, and after much argument, in which he was insulting to the sheikh, he found that the only way to enjoy the car free from this person to whom he objected, was to pay for most of the seats and so reserve the whole car. Can it be believed that this man actually paid £20 for the purpose of driving an Egyptian out of the general saloon!

The mischief of that one insolent act will never be measured. It is things like this that rankle, and breed obstacles to our rule which those who have to face them are at a loss sometimes to understand.

Such a spirit of class distinction is certainly the greatest hindrance to missionary work in the East, as every impartial observer has noted. How, for instance, can any other appeal stand against that of the Moslem

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Photo] *[Lekegian, Cairo.*

ONE OF THE SPLENDID FOUNTAINS WHICH ARE FOUND AT ALMOST EVERY TURN IN THE STREETS OF CAIRO.

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who, in approaching the pagan, says to him, however obscure or degraded he may be, "embrace the faith, and you are at once an equal and a brother." Islam knows no "colour line." There is great reluctance—or racial incapacity almost—in Western missionary advocates to acknowledge class distinction as the almost insurmountable obstacle to Christian advance in vast regions where Islam is conquering. This is shown by the fact that Mr. Tisdall can even go so far as to claim for Christianity, as a superior merit, the sole propagation of the doctrine of the Brotherhood of Mankind, ignoring that it was under Islam that so much was done to break up the feudal system of Europe by admitting no privilege or caste in the regions which it conquered (Note 12).

In pagan Arabia the people took a pertinacious delight in endless genealogies, and boasted provokingly to each other of nothing so much as noble ancestors. "We disregarded every feeling of humanity, and the duties of hospitality and neighbourhood," was their own description of their state before "God raised among them a man who called them to better things."

There can be no question of the teaching of the Koran on the subject of equality, a teaching which dictates the conduct, as I have found, of the humblest Moslem in the desert to the Governor of a province; equality is as naturally taken for granted by the one as by the other. In the Egyptian village the fellah is not my inferior, but a poor brother; there is an actual equality strong and real enough to override the greatest inequality of position. As in the earliest days, priority in the faith and spiritual eminence in the brotherhood of Islam are the only real claims to distinction; martial

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prowess, and descent, being of course a great claim in the days of conquest.

"The most worthy of honour in the sight of God is he who feareth Him most," says the Koran; the first words Mohammed spoke to the people of Mecca, after that tremendous act of his in destroying all the idols in the Kaaba, were upon the natural equality and brotherhood of mankind, from this very text. The sheikh el-Islam at Constantinople in a letter to a Western convert, a few years since, in defining Moslem doctrine, said, "Believers are all brothers."

It was, perhaps, impossible to maintain over the whole world the original arrangement devised by the Prophet, by which all men in Islam were to join in a brotherhood of the faith, which was to be closer even than the ties of family; but that is still the ideal, and many primitive communities go a long way towards realising it. The brotherhood of Medina, when each helper of the Prophet was allied to one of the exiles, to share each other's joys and sorrows, was a fine conception, and is still talked of by pious Moslems in a way that shows how the influence of it lives on. In this and a thousand similar ways the religious education of Islam, which dwells so largely on the history of the Prophet, creates a standard of conduct where rash critics have said there is none.

Every Moslem knows of the Prophet's self-reproach, that he could once have been so engrossed in talk with a group of leading citizens of Mecca, as to frown on a poor blind man who sought his advice. They know, too, that all through his life he referred to the incident, and proclaimed God's disapprobation of his conduct. That ringing verse of self-denunciation is in the Koran

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itself, and has haunted the imagination of Moslems for all time; leading to a most tender consideration of the blind as their universal rule.

"The Prophet frowned and turned aside,
Because the blind man came to him.
And how knowest thou whether he might not have been cleansed from his sins,
Or whether he might have been admonished and profited thereby?
As for the man that is rich,
Him thou receivest graciously;
And thou carest not that he is not cleansed.
But as for him that cometh unto thee, earnestly seeking his salvation,
And trembling anxiously, him dost thou neglect.
By no means shouldst thou act thus" (Sura lxxx. 1–10).

As an instance of perversity of judgment, coming from want of sympathy, it may be remarked that Sir Wm. Muir—who accounts for Mohammed by a theory of demoniacal possession—can read of this incident, and so miss its grandeur as to say that it merely signifies the Prophet's readiness, when the rich rejected him, to turn to the poor. As Mr. Bosworth Smith remarked, "Was ever moral sublimity so marred, or heroism so vulgarised? How Mohammed towers above his best historians!"

Ever after this the Prophet went out of his way to do this blind man honour; his greeting to him was, "The man is thrice welcome on whose account my Lord hath reprimanded me," and he made him twice governor of Medina.

In the days of Omar, an incident occurred which showed how deep-rooted the principle had become of the absolute equality of all men in Islam. Jabala, King of the Ghassandies, having become a Moslem, went in great pomp and ceremony to perform the pilgrimage. While circumambulating the Kaaba, the robe of a poor pilgrim was accidentally flicked across the king's neck,

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when the king turned, and, in a fury, struck him violently, knocking out his teeth. This is how Omar, the Caliph, wrote of what followed. "The poor man came to me, and prayed for redress. I sent for Jabala, and when he came before me, I asked him why he had so ill-treated a brother Moslem. He answered that the man had insulted him, and that were it not for the sanctity of the place he would have killed him on the spot. I answered that his words added greatly to the gravity of his offence, and that unless he obtained the pardon of the injured man he would have to submit to the usual penalty of the law. Jabala replied, 'I am a king, and the other is only a common man.' 'King or no king, both of you are Moslems, and both of you are equal in the eye of the law.'" The king escaped in the night, and became a Christian, rather than apologise!

The ancient history of the East teems with instances of men of lowliest birth—and of negro blood—rising to the highest posts. And modern history tells much the same story, or, if it halts at all, it is because of the prejudices of the West. Slave origin is no disgrace to this day in Egypt; a chief lady at the present Court was herself a slave, and the respect in which she is held is in no way diminished by the fact. The wife of a very high Egyptian official, whom I have met, was a negress, and when she died, no wife was more sincerely mourned or her children more tenderly cared for. Indeed, it is only to the Western mind that these facts would call for the slightest comment, on one side or the other; for there is a snobbery of the poor, towards "their betters" too. It is a touching picture of the simple affection of her little negro charge which Lady Duff Gordon gives: "He is very ugly, with his black

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face wet and swollen—with grief,—but he kisses my hand and calls me his mother, quite 'natural like': you see, colour is no barrier here."

Our thousand class distinctions, and our savage snobbery, which spoil the English character in every part of the world, are utterly incomprehensible to the Moslem people. They can, for instance, make nothing of such an incident as that which took place at the English Sporting Club at Cairo this year. Certain genial officers took the Tommys who had been called in to make up hockey or other teams to give them a cup of tea in the Pavilion; but they were soon confronted with haughty civilian complaints to the committee. It's—get out, Tommy Atkins, till the drums begin to play!

Pride I have seen, of the most haughty description, in an occasional Pasha—I generally found that he was not an Arab but a Turk—who expected acknowledgment of his position, defying the Koranic instruction by "seeking to exalt himself on the earth," and thus running the risk of losing Paradise (Sura xxviii. 83). But I have sat with a friend of mine, a rich Bey, with the family grocer and his neighbours, in a shop in the Mousky, in Cairo, without a trace of any consciousness of class, for all the world like the *Arabian Nights*. And another Cairo friend, a Pasha of the most distinguished family, a man of great possessions, moves with delightful grace amongst all sorts and conditions of men. The snobbery that measures a man's house, his salary, his father's "position," and cuts the pattern of recognition exactly to fit with self-advantage, these things are absent. The great Mohammed Ali began life as an illiterate coffee-house keeper, to end it as the very forceful ruler of all Egypt.

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CHAPTER VII

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

"The best men are those who are best to their wives and daughters. The best Moslems are those who best treat their wives. You are all shepherds; every shepherd is responsible for his flock. Man is the shepherd of his household; he is responsible for them. Woman is the shepherd of her husband's house; she is responsible for it."

A traditional saying of Mohammed.

THE persistence through centuries of time of certain fears and hatreds which have become deep rooted in the minds of a whole people, with the fallacies and prejudices they engendered, would make a curious study. I have seen an Irish lad—of that part of Ireland where Cromwell's suppressions were most severe, spit upon the picture of the Protector, actuated by hatred, purely hereditary. Remnants of the terror inspired by ancient religious persecutions are to be found still surviving in remote parts of England. There are simple folk in out-of-the-way places of East Anglia, to this day, who speak with an inherited fear of the days when "Bony" was expected to invade our shores, quite ignorant of those later fashions in invasion-bogies which have supplanted the old terror.

It is somewhat in this way that Western ideas of the Moslem people survive. An educated Egyptian of my acquaintance, who, thirty years ago, was sent to a small town in France to learn the language, said he had the greatest difficulty in getting lodgings, and when he found

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a decent woman to take him, he was treated with such eccentric oversight and suspicion as made him wretched; every word said to him showed that the woman thought him a barbarian, who had no idea of the uses of civilised furniture, or even of the elements of domestic decency. She even explained how a bed should be slept in, and used for no other purpose, and that he must remove his boots, especially, before getting into it. However, by patience he gradually wore away these mysterious prejudices; and some time afterwards the housekeeper and her husband confessed that they thought all Moslems to be under the distinct curse of God. So much so, that they believed, and so did all their friends, that the very water in which a Moslem washed developed in three days a peculiar microbe in the form of a tiny worm. The man had kept such water under close observation, until he decided that the idea—one of those vague survivals of an embittered past, possibly as long ago as the Crusades—was erroneous; the end of the connection being a long-cherished friendship.

A curious instance of this is found in the travels of Sir Bertrandon de la Brocquière, the bold Burgundian knight who journeyed in 1432 A.D. across Asia Minor and through Turkey. He asserts that the Moslem ruler of Iconium and his son "had been baptized in the Greek manner to take off the bad smell. . . . It is thus that all grandees get themselves baptized that they may not stink." It is remarkable that this belief, which dates back to the twelfth century, survives in the twentieth century in Syria, where the Christians fully believe that Moslems have a naturally evil odour which can only disappear when they are baptized.

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There is no gainsaying these popular beliefs, just as there was no appeal against the passions which engendered them. Dante, as a man of learning, would have given Mohammed a place amongst the men of intellectual power in the Divine Comedy, but under the pressure of the intense hatred of the people of Italy to the Prophet, was impelled to eventually consign him to the lowest depths of Hell.

It is to the same category that the popular Western beliefs about the position of women in Islam belong. "The Moslem does not even attribute the possession of a soul to women," is the statement I have heard made, within the last year or two, to a party of well-known writers in London, by an authoress of some repute—and there was not one to contradict it.

"So little did the Prophet reckon of woman," I heard a learned Canon of the Church of England say, "that she is never even mentioned in the Koran!"

The sheikh Mohammed Abdu was once taking a distinguished European through the Mosque of Al Azar, when a girl passed them on the way to prayer. "But," said the visitor, "I thought women had no part at all in religion," which gave the sheikh the chance of enlightening one man at least. The poet Hood wrote of Islam, "Where woman has never a soul to save."

As I have had the advantage of discussing this question of the position of women with all the chief scholars and sheikhs of Islam in Egypt (some of them deeply versed in Arabic history), and of comparing their views with those of other historians, I will summarise the result, in an attempt to make the matter clear as it is regarded from within. As recent writers have, as a further discredit to Islam, begun to affirm that the

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position of woman is worse for the Prophet's rule, I particularly sought out what information is available in Arabic history on the subject of pre-Islamic woman. I have the authority of one of the Grand Muftis—religious judges—for saying that not only in Arabia, but in the neighbouring countries, the position of women was in "the days of ignorance" very bad. In Persia she was a prisoner, and there were no male relatives to whom she might not be married. A certain number of girls were sacrificed to the Goddess Anakida. Woman was under the absolute control of her husband and parents, who might kill her, or exchange her for animals.

In Arabia itself marriage was in no way regularised; not being limited or bound by any religious doctrines or traditions, the only restrictions on a man in his dealings with any woman he took into his house was the fear of the vengeance of her male relatives and her tribe. Polygamy was general, a well-to-do Arab having from fifteen to twenty wives; a rich man would have as many as a hundred. The woman had no rights; the rules of inheritance took no count of her at all. The father had the absolute right to do whatever he pleased with his daughter. He might kill her as an infant by burying her alive—a not uncommon custom; or he might marry her as a young child, to any one he pleased, and she had no right to object.

The glimpses we get of the domestic life of those days are, I suppose, what one would naturally expect; purity and gentleness of character, in either women or men, could scarcely be encouraged by the suspicious tyrant and the untrusting slave-owner at the head of the house.

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The poets of those days ever hold the woman in contempt—she is mean and faithless, an artful foe to man, a hopeless schemer against his true interests when she is young; in many cases a screaming termagant when she is old. It was such a savage virago who, after the victory of the Meccans over Mohammed at Ohud, in the person of the wife of the successful general, Abu Sufyan, is said to have torn out the liver of her victim, the valiant Hamza, uncle of the Prophet, and chewed it, stringing at the same time his nails and pieces of his skin together to bedeck her arms and legs; an example followed by many a frenzied hag of Mecca. "I am not displeased with the mutilation of the dead," said the leader of the army (Note 13).

"Women are the whips of Satan," was a pre-Islamic adage, and another saying was, "When woman was created the Devil said to her—you are half my army; you have my confidence, I need no better weapon!"

The older generation of the opponents of Islam used to explain the success of Mohammed by "the gross ignorance of the people to whom he came." But now writers like Mr. Zwemer are attempting to prove, as one means of discrediting the Prophet, that there was culture and chivalry, courage and freedom, in pre-Islamic days.

The women of Arabia, it is true, moved about with some freedom; and supported by her men relatives, an exceptional woman would sometimes maintain a leading position. Occasionally a poetess would arise, having gifts which attracted attention to her verses celebrating the honour of the clan, but as Professor Palmer says, women "were for the most part looked upon with contempt. The marriage knot was tied in

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the simplest fashion, and untied as easily, divorce depending only on the option and caprice of the husband."

This is the state of woman in Arabia as Mohammed found it. Did he acquiesce in things as he found them, did he further degrade womankind, or did he uplift them? If one goes to the modern missionaries' account one will find such perversion as will declare that, although Mohammed abolished the slaughter of female infants, "he discovered a way by which all females could be buried alive, and yet live on—namely the veil" (*Our Moslem Sisters*, edited by S. M. Zwemer).

In the whitewashing of the pre-Islamic Arabs, Mr. Zwemer even goes so far as to suggest excuses for temporary marriages; he can imagine reasons for female infanticide; with the one object of proving that "while the position of women in 'the time of ignorance' was in some respects inferior, but in others far superior to that under Islam." He does not hesitate to categorically affirm that the use of the veil was almost unknown in Arabia before Islam, "nor did the hareem system prevail in the days of idolatry" (Note 14).

One of the chief Moslem opponents of the veil in Egypt at the present time is Mohammed Tewfik Sidky, M.D., and he states that the ulemas have acknowledged that the obligation to the veil is not binding; the habit at the time of the Prophet was to show the face and hands, in proof of which he mentioned many leading authorities. Aysha heard the Prophet advise the young daughter of Abu Bakr, who was too thinly clad, that "a woman should not show but her face and hands." In those days, and for long after, women attended the mosque prayers at the same time with men, unveiled, as they do in some parts of the Sudan and in other

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places now. If a woman to-day went veiled on the pilgrimage, her pilgrimage would be invalid.

Another learned Moslem, the late Kasim Bey Amin, expressed himself in this way: "Had the Shariat (the religious code) any distinct doctrines in favour of the veil, I would not say one word contradicting such doctrines, even if I thought them harmful. God's clear orders must be obeyed without discussion; but there is no clear doctrine in favour of the veil as it is now used. Its use is only traditional as copied from other nations, and which Moslems gradually exaggerated, giving to it a religious significance, therefore I see no objection to discussing it."

The Bey was an advocate of the veil; he did not at all approve of women mixing freely with men; he thought it better for them to pray at home than in the mosque. But he admitted that the veil was a part of the national costume in pre-Islamic times and afterwards, and that legally woman is permitted to go to the mosques for prayer, as she is permitted to go on the pilgrimage. She also has the right to go out on many occasions without the veil—to visit parents and friends. But he thought it better that a certain use of the veil should be retained. One could not help being amused at the recalling by the Bey of that characteristically feminine remark of Aysha, the Prophet's wife—with a touch of malice in it, I suspect, against her own sex—"If the Prophet had known what women have done after him, he *would* have prohibited their going out." This, from Aysha, the ruler of men, and leader of an army in battle, whose liberty had scarcely ever been restrained!

Which reminds us that it is the women of Islam themselves who are almost united against any changes

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in their lot. A cultured young Egyptian of my acquaintance is most anxious to marry, in the European way, an educated girl whom he has had the opportunity of knowing. It is only out of the natural attraction possible in the free intercourse of the sexes that he thinks there is any chance of avoiding the awful risks of finding himself unhappily mated. But it is his mother who stands in the way. He will be no son of hers, she avers, if he marries any girl but the one she and his father have chosen. Falling back upon Eastern subterfuge, he constantly puts off the desired marriage with every sort of excuse; but he is sad with the sense of impending trouble.

And this is only one of many such cases I have known. I can assure the author of *The Reproach of Islam* that the work of such reformers as Kasim Bey Amin is not, as he declares, "all against the stream," that it has not "ended in failure." The leaven is at work in the whole lump of Eastern life.

If we do not like the Moslem testimony on the question of the veil and the hareem, let us turn to the impartial historian. Lord Cromer quotes the following words, as settling the responsibility of the seclusion of women in Islam: "The system of the hareem is, in its origin, not Moslem, but simply Oriental. The only reproach that can be made against the Prophet is that, by too definite legislation, he rendered subsequent development and reform impossible." Professor Palmer considers Mohammed's responsibility to end in the fact "that he accepted without question the prevalent opinion of his time, which was not in favour of allowing too great freedom to women." The professor goes on to say "that Mohammed had a due respect for the

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female sex, as far as was consistent with the prevailing state of education and opinion, is evident."

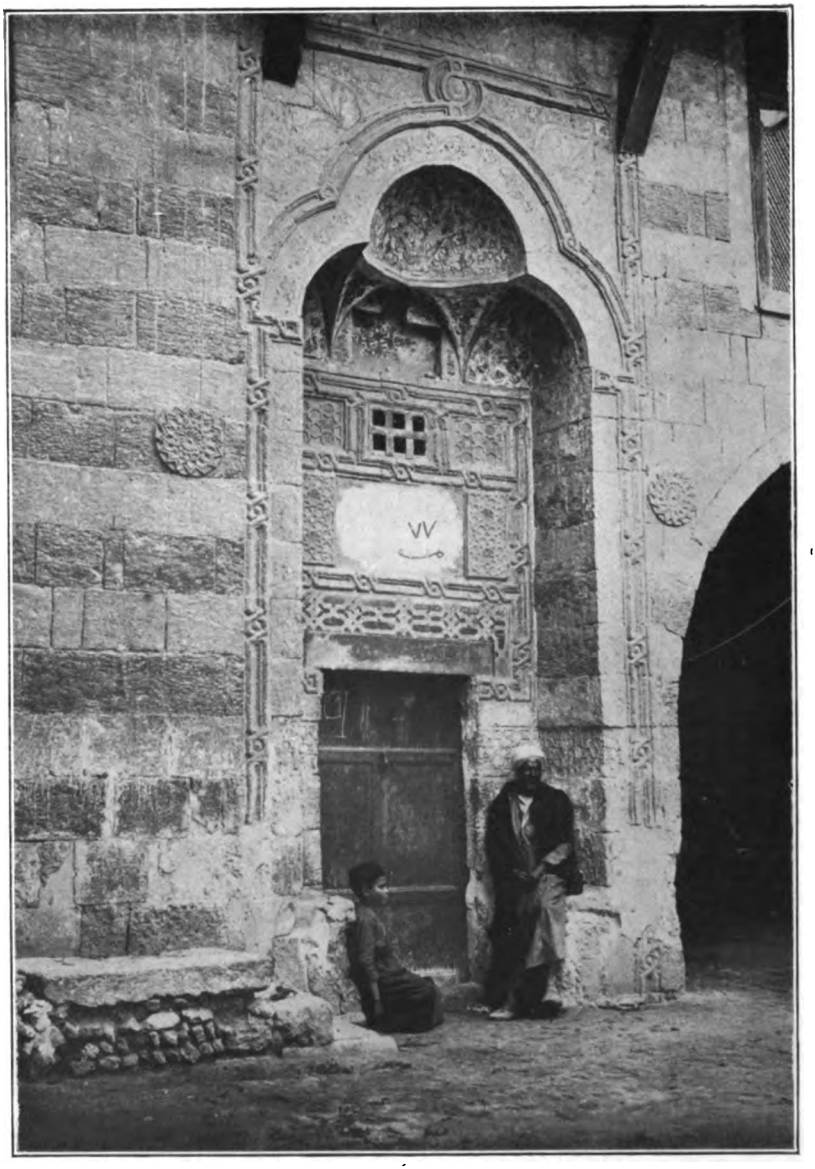
As for the veil, Palgrave declared that "it is a matter of custom, and not of creed." Professor Margoliouth, no lenient critic of Islam, says in his latest book, "the use of the veil goes back to early times . . . to pre-Islamic antiquity," and "indeed the text of the Koran seems by the most natural interpretation to assume that the face will be uncovered, and certain ceremonies of the pilgrimage require that it should be so." Is Bulwer Lytton wrong in attributing the veil to the women of Pompeii in the first century A.D. ?

Khadijah, the Prophet's first wife, wore a veil in the days before the new religion was founded. One of the tests she proposed to prove the quality of the spiritual visitant who troubled her husband was, that if he was reputable, he would leave the presence of an unveiled woman.

It is clear that the Prophet never intended the veil to excuse such seclusion as prevents engaged couples from seeing each other till after the marriage, against which custom so many educated Egyptian men are now rebelling. When Al-Moghera ibn Sheba informed Mohammed that he was about to marry, he asked him, "Did you see her ?" "No," was the reply. The Prophet then said, "You must certainly see each other before you marry."

As soon as Mohammed had power he abolished in unmistakable terms the murder of baby girls, and proceeded to teach his followers that respect is due to women. The opening verse of the fourth Sura, called "Woman," asserted a new teaching, against which the Arabs of the day were at first inclined to revolt—"People

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Phot] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

THE DOORWAY OF AN ARAB HOUSE.

The inscription over the door is the number of the house in Arabic.

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be humble before God, who hath created man, and his wife, of the same soul." "Ye have rights over your wives, and your wives have rights over you"—an astonishing doctrine in that day. The men, to their surprise, understood that the Prophet's teaching was that man and woman were in spiritual things equal, and were equally responsible to God. He still, however, firmly believed that men are superior to women on account of qualities with which God hath gifted the one above the other, and on account of the maintenance supplied by the man; the wife may even be scourged by the husband for refractoriness (Sura iv. 38). The Prophet, however, never scourged any woman, and all his teaching was on the side of gentleness, forbearance, and every sort of considerate kindness. "Associate kindly with women," he said, "for in them God hath placed abundant good" (Sura iv. 23), and "He hath put love and tenderness between you" (Sura xxx. 20). In his last solemn address to the people of Mecca he said, "Treat your women well."

The reverence Mohammed always taught to mothers is as fresh in its application to-day as when he was alive. I have seen the beautiful devotion of mothers to their sons in the East again and again. "If all your relatives visited you at once, your first answer must be to your mother," he is reported to have said. "The keys of Paradise are at your mother's feet." The death of his mother was a deep grief to him as a child, and he never lost his love and reverence for her. More than fifty years later he turned aside from his pilgrimage to visit her grave, and he wept there.

As an instance of certain methods of controversy, Mr. Robert Speer said at the Student Volunteer Con-

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vention at Nashville, 1906, "The very chapter in the Mohammedan Bible which deals with the legal status of woman . . . goes by the title in the Koran itself of 'The Cow.'" Both the speaker at this Christian conference, and Mr. Zwemer, who quotes him, should know that the names of the Suras were not chosen by Mohammed; that they are merely taken from a prominent word at the beginning of each Sura; that "the cow" is the western translation of the very word which is rendered "heifer" in our own Bible (Num. xix.), and the Sura is even called "the Heifer" in Palmer's translation. One can only suppose these gentlemen wished to convey to those ignorant of the facts, a vulgar suggestion which is as unworthy as it is unfair. Mr. Zwemer adds, "Although, of course, the title of the chapter was not given it for that reason." Then why, if may be asked, propagate such an appeal to mere ignorant prejudice. "The Cow" sura has nothing whatever to do with any rude nickname the Turks may use about women.

It must be interesting to English reformers to know that the Egyptian Arab Muslim thinks all our customs are very hard upon women. Instead of turning an erring woman out of society, "the concealing of evil" is considered very meretorious, and, where women are concerned, positively a religious duty.

Lady Duff Gordon asked Omar, her servant, if he would tell his brother if he saw his wife do anything wrong. (*N.B.*—He can't endure her.) "Certainly not. I must cover her with my cloak." She discovered that, founded on the verse from the Koran, "The woman is made for the man, but the man is also made for the woman," there was a distinct sentiment in

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favour of the obligations of chastity being equal; that the allowances made for the man should also be made for the woman. All unchastity is wrong; "an abomination;" the thunders of the Koran on the subject testifying to this, but equally so in men and women. "Scourge (each of them) with an hundred stripes" (Sura xxiv. 2–3).

It is the Arabs, it must be remembered, whose traditions go back to the earliest Islamic times, who hold these views. The Turks and other nations who introduced and fostered the hareem system, of necessity, have other sentiments.

In a recent Arabic book, on the position of women in Islam, it is stated "A man who will patiently bear the bad character of his wife will be rewarded by God like Ayyoub, the Prophet." Husbands, says the Grand Cadi (judge), should be very patient and tolerant to their wives, even to those who transgress. A family conference must be quietly called to consider a serious charge against her, and the four necessary witnesses must be disinterested. Before the sentence of divorce is pronounced she ought to be invited to repent.

Such a statement never ought to have been penned that "The idea of woman being created by God to be man's helpmeet, the sharer of his joys, and the partner of his sorrows, seems never to have entered Mohammed's mind" (Note 15). Not only are all the sayings of the Prophet in accordance with such an ideal of marriage, but the example of his married life with Khadijah fulfilled it. A more perfect union is, perhaps, not recorded of any man of genius.

"Of God's mercy He made of yourselves wives to sympathise with you, and He put kindness and mercy

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between the two," is a traditional saying—one of many. Khadijah must ever rank as one of those good angels who, by their ministry of faith and encouragement, have preserved certain men of genius, in the early days of their work, from despair. A tradition says of her that "She believed in Mohammed, and believed in the truth of the revelation, and fortified him in his aims. She was the first who believed in God, in His messenger, and in the Revelation. Thereby God had sent Mohammed comfort, for as often as he heard aught disagreeable, contradictory, or how he was shown to be a liar, she was sad about it. God comforted him through her when he returned to her, in rousing him up again and making his burden more light to him, assuring him of her own faith in him, and representing to him the futility of men's babble."

Many traditions testify to this, as to the suicidal depressions of Mohammed, in the first years when he felt himself called to a special work, the import of which was not yet clear to him. T. W. Arnold declares this union to be "truly one of the most beautiful pictures of a perfect wedded life that history gives us" (*Preaching of Islam*, p. 9). The missionary "corrective" is, however, provided by the Rev. W. St. Clair-Tisdall, in the words previously quoted.

To show that an appreciation of this sentiment survives, I may quote from the dedication of the recent Arabic work on women, by the Chancellor of the Court of Assize in Egypt—Kasim Bey Amin; of the work itself I have already spoken. "To my friend, Saad Zagloul—In you I have found a heart that thinks, and a will that acts. To me you have been the image of friendship and cordiality, and thus it is that I have been

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able to perceive that life is not mere misery, but that it has sweet hours to those who can appreciate them. It is from the intercourse of our friendship that I am able to judge that such cordiality would give hours of deeper happiness if exchanged between a husband and wife. Here is the secret of happiness for which I work—to put woman in her right position, and so benefit both men and women."

The ideal state of marriage has never been entirely lost in Islam, I think. It was an Egyptian Moslem who wrote in this way in the sixteenth century: "We Sufis have entered into an engagement to espouse only one wife, and not to associate others with her. The man who has only one wife is happy. . . . A pure-hearted wife is a great happiness in the house. Oh! how often while I was weaving have I stolen a glance at my wife, the mother of my son, sewing garments for the poor. I understood then that I had happiness in my house. Often she opened her larder and distributed the contents to the poor. May God be merciful to her." The writer, Sharani, died in Cairo, in 1565 A.D. It was a Moslem saint who sang—

> "Love and tenderness are qualities of humanity,
> Passion and lust are qualities of animality.
> Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress,
> The Creator's self, as it were, not a mere creature."
>
> (*Rumi*, 1207 A.D.)

Amongst the educated men this as an ideal of companionship and friendship has become almost general. There is nothing they so much envy in the Western nations as the capacity for practical comradeship in our women-folk. I never found an educated youth who did not favour the education of women in the hope

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that the women of Egypt would advance in liberty and capacity, so that the marriage bond might become more like that of the West.

My most intimate Egyptian friend has a home-life which in spite of the hareem is most perfectly happy. His mother rules her family with wisdom and deep affection, having been in every sense a companion and a helpmeet to her husband for close on forty years. This young man has been in England, and admires the position of our women, and especially the freedom of the wife to go anywhere with her husband. He is too loyal and obedient to the wishes of his parents to desire to oppose their ideas as to his own betrothal (which are those customary in Egyptian upper-class families), but he is all for the education of girls, and their eventual freedom. This he believes can be accomplished in accordance with his religion, to which he is deeply attached.

Without the least desire to minimise the great evils of woman's lot, it must be admitted that it is one of the chief errors of the West to imagine that the Eastern woman's life is generally one of utter wretchedness, with a constant pining on the part of every one of them after such emancipation as presents itself to the European mind. My wife has talked with women of all grades of society, from the old-fashioned mother of a large family to the young daughters of the rich Pasha who have had every advantage of education and accomplishment known to the English or French girl of the upper classes; to the wife of the Government clerk, and to the poorest fellaha. Of the purely Turkish hareem I know very little, from first hand. On the whole, the restraints of the life, as we have seen it, do not cause

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the woman active unhappiness, and they think their customs good; the rich ladies of Cairo frankly admit that they do not see much to envy in their European sisters who come under their observation there.

"We are quite happy in the society of our father and brothers; we have many interests and ambitions, in study and accomplishments. We think we should not like to meet men promiscuously, as English ladies do," said the wife and daughters of one of the chief familics. But this was, of course, a case in which there was wealth and very enlightened parents, and a happy home-life, to which the hareem was in no way a hindrance. It was quite a joke with the household that whenever I called on the Pasha he was always in the hareem part of the house, and I knew by many signs that his family life was most cherished by him.

Where there is a want of culture, the evils of seclusion make themselves manifest in the jealousy and tyranny of the women towards each other—for it is customary for families to combine, the sons often taking home their wives to join their mother's hareem; with a result easily to be imagined in England, where one of our three national jokes (or is it four?) is that of the incompatibility of the mother-in-law to the family life. The whole system under which such ignorant women live gives a low and mean tone to almost every act and word.

The woman of the lower middle class lives her quiet life in the belief that if her husband relaxed the rules of seclusion it would be a sign that he did not care for her. The poor woman of the village is not more unhappy than is the woman whose life is one of constant labour in other countries. Often the husband is kind and considerate, in all classes; and always the woman's

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greatest joy is in her children; and the attachment of sons is the comfort of old age.

Divorce, and the fear of it—this is the black cloud over woman's existence in Egypt, of which she is most conscious. In many of the humble village homes there is a constant dread of a second wife appearing; with the chief object that the family may be increased, for the only chance of a livelihood for the fellaheen family is "a quiverfull" to join in the labour of the field, which will scarcely then yield bread sufficient. The number of the prayers, and charms, and special praying-places, and sheikhs' tombs, to avert childlessness, is incredible; not only for the love of children, but again in view of the horror of divorce, for which childlessness is sufficient reason.

To the middle-class women, as to those of the aristocracy, seclusion has many alleviations. The constant exchange of visits to friends, and the many demands of friendship in the matter of long visits of congratulation, as of condolence, bring a great deal of change and variety. There is much fancy needlework, and I have frequently heard the sound of the piano in the distant hareem. There are many jewels to display to friends, and the art of dress is not neglected, as a married man's accounts (shown to me, but not to be discussed in any way—for this would be improper) prove.

The position of the elder married woman of this class gains in freedom with the years. The widow is almost as free in all her movements as the man, with control sometimes of large affairs. I know of more than one widow lady who manages considerable estates with vigour; and of married ladies who travel with their husbands in all countries; and these not of

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the rank of those rich Turkish wives who visit Europe as a matter of course each summer, and discard their pretence of a veil before the harbour bar at Alexandria is crossed.

The tragedy of seclusion and the veil, and all that they mean, are with those girls, daughters of middle-class but unenlightened mothers, who have not the happy home-life I have mentioned. It is the inevitable tragedy of all transition stages in human affairs. A girl is well educated, even sent to France or Switzerland, living a free life with other girls, making European friends, and for a short time after her return home has respite from the veil and seclusion, and visits European homes in Egypt where there are daughters, as well as her Egyptian acquaintances. But the old-fashioned mother in the background has issued her fiat: at a certain given time the sentence of restraint must fall. There is rebellion, and in some cases disaster.

In a case well known to me in Lower Egypt, a beautiful girl had been highly educated at home, and had read many books of romance in English and French, from which she had gathered a great deal of knowledge of women's life in Europe, and especially of the poetry of chivalry and of love. She was sought in marriage—through her widowed mother—by a relative whom as a child she had seen, and remembered sufficiently well to know that she detested him. There was just enough of the modern element about the home to admit of a small episode out of which a romantically inclined girl created an idyll. A letter, a message by telephone; the conservative side of the household suspicious. And then the alarm of the mother, who knew that if a shade of a breath of such a suspicion got abroad, it would

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mean for her daughter a discredited life. The distasteful marriage must be pressed forward. The girl had, of course, the right to decline the marriage, but the grip that circumstance laid upon her seemed too strong. The idyll could not be realised; and the heart quietly broke. The marriage day was a day of mourning, and the poor women who had assembled to condole, wailed as the white burden left the house, "There goes the bride!"

This girl was deeply religious, as many of the women are. I know this is contrary to the opinion expressed by Lane,—"in Egypt the women seldom pray, even at home,"—but my wife and I constantly heard of women who were very regular in their prayers, and devout in their conduct. There is usually a praying-place for the women in the home, as there is for the men, and the chief women lead the stated prayers for the family and servants. Special sheikhs, the very old men, go to the hareems to teach the women in religious matters and to read the Koran; and as the pious men seclude themselves in the mosques during the fast of Rhamadan, the women make religious "retreats" for themselves at home, to read the Koran and to pray. On Fridays they pray the stated noonday prayer, and all household duties and work are suspended till it is over (Note 16). There are, indeed, special rules which adapt the ablutions to the woman's needs, as well as in the postures. She need not undo her hair in the one case, or raise her hands as high as the men in the other; an obvious consideration.

In the Sudan the women still pray in the mosques at the same time as the men, but in the back rows, so that the men may not see them. I have seen rows of

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women behind the men making the Bairam special prayer in the desert. At Mecca, I was assured by more than one pilgrim, it is quite usual for the ladies of distinguished classes to appear at public worship with the men, not even being confined to the use of any special part of the sacred court of the mosque. In Algiers there is a special woman's mosque, and I have many times entered its precincts and seen numbers of women at prayer there, a fact I mention to show how little justification there is for the statement that women have little or no part in religion, so constantly reiterated.

As for the equality of soul, if there is one thing in the Koran stated and re-stated with legal precision, it is this. "Truly the men who resign themselves to God, and the women who resign themselves, and the devout men and the devout women, and the men of truth, and the women of truth, and the patient and humble, and who give alms and who fast, and are chaste, men and women; and the men and women who oft remember God; for them hath God prepared forgiveness and a rich recompense" (Sura xxxiii. 36).

Though Mohammed legalised divorce, he never once divorced a wife, and he left his followers in no doubt of his detestation of it: "divorce is of all legal proceedings the most hated by God," he declared.

Added to the respect for woman which Mohammed taught, there is that remarkable set of laws, instituted in the Koran, which still in their application (in spite of the decadence of Islam which has borne with such terrible hardship on women) place the Moslem woman's rights higher than those of some of the European nations. "The laws affecting women," as Mr. Stanley

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Lane-Poole says, "are indeed the most minute and the most considerate in the Koran."

This is how a Moslem lady—a Turkish princess—of the present day states the matter (quoted in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, by Lady Massie Blomfield): The Prophet granted woman the privilege of perfect equality with men, with the exercise of legal functions. The laws of divorce were remodelled by him: the husband's power to divorce was restricted; women could obtain a separation; irrevocable divorce was rendered rarer by the enactment that a woman thus rejected could not return to her husband unless she were first married and divorced by another; and four eye-witnesses were required before a wife could be convicted of unfaithfulness. A woman had a legal right over her own fortune, and could dispose of it as she pleased.

She could introduce into the marriage contract certain conditions to protect her interests in case of divorce; she had the right to vote, and take part in theological and legal debates. What is even more important is that these privileges were not merely nominal. They were freely used by Moslem women centuries ago.

At the present day, under Mohammedan law, the women possess privileges which compare very favourably with those enjoyed by their sex in other countries. An unmarried woman, until she is of age, is under parental control. After that she is entitled to similar property rights with men. She shares with her brothers in the inheritance of her parents' property, in different but relative proportions; having in this way an immense advantage over the English custom by which sons, and

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especially the first-born, gain so enormously by inheritance over daughters. She cannot be married without her consent; a marriage settlement by the husband upon the wife is demanded and enforced by law; the husband is compelled to support his wife; he has no right to her goods and property, nor may he appropriate her earnings or ill-treat her. A father has not full control over a daughter after she is of age; she then may manage her own property, and even choose a husband without necessarily taking the advice of her parents.

If the legal condition of women be considered in conjunction with that of their sex in several European lands, it will readily be seen that technically it need not fear scrutiny. How recent is the passing of the "Married Women's Property Act" in England, by which a woman has control over her own fortune. In France, a woman is a minor in the eyes of the law. A married woman there cannot undertake any employment, or appear before a court of justice, unless her husband has first granted his consent; it is only since 1907 that she has been legally entitled to dispose of her own earnings. In Germany a husband can, if he wish, forbid his wife to engage in any business. In Italy a married woman cannot sign or draw a cheque on her own account for her own money; her testimony alone is not accepted in a court of law; she cannot engage in trade or dispose of her own property without her husband's consent; he has full power over her earnings, and she cannot plead in a court of law without his permission.

Islam, I maintain, clearly uplifted woman from a very degraded position, granting her rights never known to her before. It is an entirely erroneous notion which prevails in the West that the seclusion of the

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hareem was part of Mohammed's rule of life for women. Neither in practice nor in theory was strict seclusion ordered by the Prophet, as the history of his own womenfolk, whom he certainly regarded as worthy of special guardianship, shows. The hareem of those early days was merely the necessary precaution of a lawless period, and not in any way a rule or an excuse for the voluptuous developments which were afterwards instituted. Sale declares that Mohammed's law of divorce has operated as a practical prohibition, divorce being of rare occurrence among Moslems, and considered shameful. Unfortunately the law is so interpreted in modern times, in Egypt especially, that divorce is made easy, and is very common; but what Sale states is still true of the Moslems living in primitive ways. It was a learned clergyman, of the Church of England, who stated that, "in point of fact, the doctrine of divorce inculcated by Mohammed is plainly a studied copy after that laid down by Moses." Of polygamy, too, the same writer says: "The restraints imposed by Mohammed on polygamy were borrowed, precept by precept, and word for word, from the practice of the Jewish law, as interpreted by Rabbinical tradition. The law of Moses yielded a reluctant sufferance to prevailing custom, in its silent toleration of a plurality of wives."

The freedom and dignity woman attained in those early days leads the modern reformers of Islam to turn, in this matter, as in so many others, to the first days of their faith.

Sheikh Shawish read a learned paper at the recent Egyptian Congress protesting against the present-day facilities for the Moslem to divorce his wife, which is such a terrible blot, especially in Egypt; declaring that

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the Koranic laws would make it impossible. It is to the Koran that many modern Moslems turn for the settlement of the question of polygamy in a way satisfactory to women, while not utterly ignoring the difference between climate, and physical constitution, in the East, as compared with the North and West. In Egypt polygamy is rarely or never practised amongst the higher classes; an unanswerable reply to such sweeping statements as those made in the Bishop of London's famous speech, so far as it concerns Egypt, being that the census shows the number of males and females to be almost equal. The Bishop said: "I hardly realised that while the law of Islam restricts the number of wives to four at a time, it allows an unlimited divorce, and an unlimited number beside the wives who can be taken into the hareem." Strictly speaking, the number, whether wives or slaves, must not be more than four.

This is what the Mufti says about polygamy: When the Prophet appeared among the Arabs, polygamy was much practised, and it was impossible to abolish it, and in the early days of Islam the loss of men in battle and on foreign service made it necessary. I am even disposed to say—he continued—that under certain circumstances it is a necessary evil with Orientals, and that in all Western judgments in the matter, climate should be considered. Mohammed first limited the legal number of wives to four, but he instituted such restrictions as made it almost impossible of fulfilment. The first condition is that the husband must do them all equal rights and justice, which the great Imāms, especially Fakhr-al-Razy and Fat'halla, have interpreted to apply to every relationship of life. To the vast majority of Moslems this Koranic law must be

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binding. "If you are afraid you may not do them justice, marry only one . . . this will make justice on your part easier" (Sura iv. 3).

Of the freedom of women in early Islam there is abundant proof, beginning with the Prophet's widows and children, who not only took a part in the intellectual life, but also in the practical affairs of the country.

To Hafsa, one of Mohammed's wives, had been entrusted the chest in which were kept the precious documents and records from which the Koran was afterwards compiled. Aysha exercised the influence of a Prince of the Church, and, in addition, led an army in battle. Fatma, Mohammed's daughter, was very influential amongst the people of Medina, where all the foremost women were accustomed to attend the lectures and speeches of the caliphs and others.

The inspiring story of a girl-hero of that time, Khawala el-Kandia, throws a light on the early position of women. Her brother was a famous knight in the time of Omar, the second Caliph; he was taken prisoner in the battle of Agnadin, when an expedition was organised by Khalid ibn Ul-Walid, a famous general, for his rescue. On the way the general observed an agile horseman, who was veiled save for the eyes, pursuing the Roman soldiers, with remarkable courage, killing some, and putting others to flight, by taking extraordinary risks. Following this warrior with his troops, he demanded who he was. Dropping the veil, she said, "I am a girl—Khawala, daughter of Azur, sister of Darar, who has been taken prisoner. I was playing with Arab girl-friends when a messenger came and told me my brother had been taken. I determined at once to go to his rescue." She joined the expedition

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which rescued her brother; and, with the experience gained, she afterwards played a prominent part as a soldier in the conquest of Egypt and Syria. She was also a great poetess, her theme being the praise of virtue and courage, and she was esteemed not only for her rare beauty, but for her purity.

She does not stand alone. The enthusiasm and courage of Moslem women in time of war is shown again and again. In the great battle between Omar and the Emperor Heraclius (641 A.D.), the women, besides helping in the fight, ministered to the troops as nurses, water-carriers, and so on, while all the time urging the Moslem troops to renewed effort. It was the encouragement given by their intrepid women-folk that made it impossible for the men to turn their backs on the enemy.

In the time of Omieh, women had attained to a dignified position in every walk of life. There has perhaps been no time in history when she so nearly rivalled man. She was thoroughly educated and trained, in not only writing, poetry, and literature, but in the deepest religious matters, so that some of them became professors of traditional lore, even in the mosque universities. The famous history of Ibn Khalkan records the names of very many women, some from the lowest classes, who became excellent poetesses. Sakina, daughter of Hosein, was amongst the most cultivated women of her time, her *salon* attracting all the men and women of genius of the day.

At the time of the Abbasides, women played a prominent part in society, and many became famous as teachers and lecturers. The Imām Shaffey, one of the four great pillars of Islam, was taught by a woman. Another famous woman of that period was Khazaran,

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the wife of Al Mokdy, who was very influential in State affairs, all historians agreeing that she was consulted in all important matters, and that she was distinguished in charitable service. She, too, had a great *salon*, and received all the functionaries and governors, ulemas and poets, at the house of the Caliphate. During the Caliphate of her son, she was joint-administrator of the Empire.

Another wonderful woman was the wife of the Caliph al-Mahtaded. At the death of her husband, during the minority of her son, she was the real ruler of the Empire, and received the ambassadors of foreign countries in the presence of the ministers. She glorified those early days by erecting a hospital at a cost of £7000.

It would be tedious to mention the names and attainments of the women famous as teachers, as rulers, as social leaders, even as scientists. It may be said that up to the time of the Abbasides, the opportunities for distinction, and place, and honour, were almost equal between men and women. The change has been all for the worse. As in the past it was the ordinances of her religion which gave her respect and upheld her rights, so it is maintained it may be by way of religion that woman's emancipation from the present bondage may come.

The decadence of the lot of women can be traced, it is maintained, from the time when the Islamic world itself fell into degenerate habits, and began to imitate the indulgent and luxurious ways of other nations, whilst it tried to stifle its conscience by giving false interpretations to the Koran. It was when luxurious living increased, in the ninth and tenth centuries, that palaces were built, and houses began to be divided into two parts, one of them entirely reserved for the women

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—a new form of hareem with a new significance—a custom which Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall so mistakenly attributes to " the laws of their ' Prophet '."

When the Persians became powerful in Islam, the position of woman began to be seriously degraded, and eunuchs were adopted, the sign of a vicious sentiment, says the Turkish Princess already quoted. " Towards the end of the dynasty of the Abbasid Caliphs, the Moslem woman first found herself sinking from her high place of honour. Luxury and debauchery took possession of the Court ; woman became a mere chattel, the instrument of her lord and master's vicious pleasure. The conquest of Constantinople gave the finishing stroke to the liberties of the Moslem women, and from that day the sensuous indulgent life of the hareem, with its soft divans and silken cushions, its jewels and voluptuous pleasures, has gradually sapped the intellectual and moral strength of its denizens.

With regard to the future, it is encouraging to find the growing sentiment in favour of change, founded on religion and past history.

The experience in the modern education of men has been to show that, to abruptly introduce European training is to run the risk of destroying his religion and leaving him an Agnostic, as Lord Cromer has rather sweepingly asserted. " Is there any reason," he goes on to ask, " why European education should not produce the same effect on the Europeanised Egyptian woman ? I know of none." But he urges the importance of reform, despairing entirely of a civilisation, equal to the European standard, making any progress in Mohammedan countries unless the condition of their women is improved.

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But the gathering opinion of the men of Islam is that emancipation can be found from within. In Egypt the sentiment in favour of education seems secure enough to make advance certain. "The study of the Moslem religious code will give us most solid support," says the Princess, "will arm us with the most cogent reasons in our favour, and will also guide our first steps in the struggle to retain our legal rights and lost liberty of action."

As for what that regained liberty is to mean, the Chancellor at the Court of Assize put it in this way: When the Western woman began to receive education, and to train her mind, her character developed at the same time. She realised her rights, and proclaimed them, until she came to co-operate with man in his daily life. She joined him in aspiring to knowledge and in pursuing it. She went with him to church, to public gatherings, and on his travels, becoming his constant companion and helper. This is the place we aspire to put our women in in Islam; especially I want to see the Egyptian woman attain to the same degree of progress; this would be the greatest event in the history of Egypt. That some of the ulemas are against us must not deter us, for many of the leading authorities of Islam are with us, indeed, many ulemas of the present day have declared that even the veil is not insisted upon in our creed. Where there are two opinions, and alternatives, surely all sensible men will follow that most useful to human liberty, and for the good of society.

It is my firm belief—the Chancellor went on,—that the political and social conditions of a nation progress simultaneously. Wherever man has degraded the position of woman, the nation was doomed to fall, and

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Photo] [*Dittrich, Cairo.*

TAKING A DRINK AT A PUBLIC FOUNTAIN.

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wherever woman enjoys her personal liberty, man has enjoyed his political liberty. In the East man has enslaved woman, and he has been enslaved by his ruler; indoors he is the oppressor, out of doors he is the oppressed. The position we have assigned to women in Egypt deserves our own enslavement. We have been avenged upon by nature too; true happiness has been denied us by our own tyranny over women; our character has been spoiled—we are sick at heart.

But we must strive to change all this, to recognise the true worth and dignity of woman, and to give her the liberty which is her due, and which will benefit our manhood and the future of our nation in every way. Surely we are all agreed that the fortunes of the whole household are in the hands of the woman. Shall we deny her every sort of education to fit her to perform her duties nobly. The character of our children is in the mother's hands. I assert that unless we put woman in her right position, making her the equal mate and friend of the man, no advance is possible to us. I believe with the poet Schiller that no great man ever succeeded in attaining his end without having a woman whom he loved nearest him.

I am sure myself, he continued, that no man will be happy unless he is devoted to a woman who is at the same time devoted and true to him. No doubt the Islamic peoples are in a backward condition, that needs a speedy recovery. Let us face the facts of the disease, and then seek the cure. I am convinced that in Egypt our retrogression is not due to climate, for great things have been accomplished in the past in this country.

It is not due to Islam; many are the appeals in our religion to strenuous labour and to progress; and the

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history of the glorious period of our advance shows that the obstacles to a great civilisation lie not in our creed. Indeed, we are in our present state, because the principles and the practice of primitive Islam have disappeared. Fables and false traditions have imposed upon the people, and we have yielded ourselves up to softness and vice. The core and heart of our disease—and I think no one who has studied the life of the East will say that this is not true—is that the younger generation, after they have completed their course of study, even to the highest degree, are found lacking in character, in proper feeling, in spontaneous honest action. This is the punishment for our treatment of women (Note 17). It is because our sons have not been trained in their conscience by their mothers in childhood. They lack refinement of feeling—that overwhelming power in shaping one's actions—because we have degraded the women, who should teach us refinement. Oh! this is why we are unstable and corrupt, and why advance is so slow. Men are not true to themselves. Thus we see our poets write excellent verses on love, while they are not inclined to love, themselves. Our orators give the most rousing speeches of fiery patriotism, while they do not live the lives of patriots. Our young men profess inviolate devotion to truth, but can be bought by those who wish to silence them. Our religious teachers, whose lives are devoted to instructing the people, are often the last to have true religious feeling.

Lord Cromer was right. What the Egyptian so much requires is not so much that his mind should be trained, as that his character should be formed. That would settle most of the sad questions arising from the decadence which overtook Islam.

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CHAPTER VIII

A NEW WAY WITH MOSLEMS

"If unjust arguments are employed against the faith of the Koran, either the Moslems must have lost all their characteristic intelligence and penetration . . . or we may with moral certainty predict the result. From what they *know* to be wrong in the teaching of the Christian missionaries, they will naturally argue that what they *know not* is wrong also. From our false estimate of Mohammedanism in its civil and intellectual influences, they may, without further examination, infer the falseness of our estimate of its spiritual claims. In this way every door may be barred against the admission of conviction, before the saving truths of the Gospel have so much as sounded in their ears."

Rev. C. Forster, *Mohammedanism Unveiled*, vol. ii. p. 377.

THE existence of such a vast number of people as the Moslems (it is estimated that at the present time there are about 260,000,000 of them in the world), all of one religion, and acknowledging the authority of one Caliph, has of necessity always demanded the attention of any man who dreamed of power in world politics.

There was a period when the contemplation of Islam fascinated Napoleon. When in Egypt, he went to pray in the mosques, dressed as an Arab, and he debated with keenest interest on all religious matters with intelligent sheikhs. He sought in many ways to conciliate himself with the great ulemas of Al Azar, in Cairo, gathering them around him and taking their counsel on all occasions, when circumstances permitted. When his troops were starting for Egypt he impressed upon them the duty of showing the greatest respect for the Koran, the mosques, and the Imāms. Indeed, it was

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said that he seriously contemplated becoming a Moslem.

In his proclamation in Cairo Napoleon said, "The French are the true Moslems. We become better Christians than before by becoming Moslems. By the political alliance of France with Islam we create a military power with which the world must count. By the religious alliance of the Gospel with the Koran we will make to shine such a light for the souls of men as they have not yet seen" (Note 18).

If this seems to savour somewhat of the gaudy periods of the political opportunist, we may remember that when the hopelessness of St. Helena gave candour to his opinions, Napoleon still often expressed his sympathy with Islam, and spoke of many of its tenets with praise.

Mr. Carl Peters has not hesitated to preach to the German people the importance of an attempt to cultivate a friendship with Islam, in the hope of one day using its power to help the modern ambitions of their fatherland.

The history of German enterprise in Egypt during the last few years goes to show that these are not mere words. Mr. Carl Peters was in Cairo this winter (1912) and proved that he has abated nothing of the brutal frankness which characterises his awful suggestion to fashion out of Islam the dynamite to blow into the air the rule of England and France from Cape Nun to Calcutta.

There is no doubt that the influence of Germany, so studiously and daringly cultivated in Constantinople, has been weakened of late by the suspicions of the Moslems that the war in Tripoli would never have occurred but for the encouragement given by Germany to Italy, and later by suspicions that she was suggesting to Russia the break-up of Turkey. And yet it seems but the

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other day since the German Emperor suggested to his "friend and ally," the Sultan, that a Holy War (Jihād) should be preached in China against the Manchu tyranny.

If Pan-Islamism is one of the nightmares which occasionally visit some parts of Europe, the "Yellow Peril" has never lost its terrors for the rulers of Germany. That both these "perils" may be closely allied has never been sufficiently realised.

There is an immense Moslem population in China, which, as knowledge of that land of mystery has grown, has been found to be larger than had been previously suspected. Indeed there have not been wanting men who have asserted that this is destined to be the national faith of the China of the future. "If China," wrote Professor Vasil'ev, a Russian, "which contains at least one-third of the human race, were to be converted into a Mohammedan empire, the political relations of the whole East would be considerably modified. The world of Islam, stretching from Gibraltar to the Pacific Ocean, might again lift up its head. Islam might and would threaten Christendom, and the peaceful activity of the Chinese people, which is now so profitable to the rest of the world, would, in the hands of fanatics, be turned into a yoke upon the necks of other nations." "Again, if Islam some day succeeds in establishing its political supremacy over China, and then claims the allegiance of the mass of the population to its faith, will it meet with a refusal? We think not, for such a change will seem infinitely easier to the Chinese than the change of costume which took place on the accession of the reigning dynasty." With regard to numbers, a Moslem writer several years ago declared that the people of Islam were increasing enormously; that

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they then numbered 70,000,000, not including the people of Kasgar, though other estimates vary from three to twenty millions.

Whether we consider these alarmist views seriously or not, there is no doubt that recent developments in China have rekindled the alarms of Germany. Mr. Carl Peters believes that the changes of this very year in the Far East, which have turned the most ancient monarchy in the world into a "modern republic after the American pattern," whose first act was to decide on conscription of the whole gigantic nation after the German model, will before long make it imperative for the British, German, and American nations to safeguard the future of our race and the development of our culture. "For Europe the Yellow Peril has become a reality." He thinks that necessity from the Far East will one day press Great Britain, France, and Germany into a "United States of Europe."

It might seem an unnecessary thing to press the importance of a careful study of Islam on the British people, in whose Empire are more followers of this faith than belong to any other power—in India alone we rule 65,000,000 Moslems. But the fact should be faced, that our ignorance on this subject is nothing short of appalling, and comparatively little is being done to lessen it by those who are sent to govern these people, or even by those who go to them with the Gospel of Christ. We seem to carry with us a constitutional dislike of the Eastern people, which makes sympathy almost impossible, while our preconceived notions lead us to misjudge them in almost every particular.

Ruskin makes use of some very remarkable words, which may be pondered in this connection. In the

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East, it is asserted, the people all manifest in a hundred ways the great fact of their belief in God. With the Western, on the contrary, the outward form of practising a belief in a God, is a thing to be half-ashamed of—something to hide—a deep difference between the East and the West lying beneath the incompatibility of temper on the part of modern Englishmen to accept the religious habit of thought in the East. The first law of the East is prayer to God; and whether the shrine be Jerusalem, Mecca, or Lhassa, the sanctity of worship surrounds the votary and protects the pilgrim. All prayer is holy in the sight of the Oriental, whatever the creed or the form; it is inconceivable to him that any man can show scorn at the sight of any other man whatever engaged in prayer.

Into this life comes the Englishman, frequently destitute of one touch of sympathy with the prayers of any people, or the faith of any creed; hence our rule in the East has ever rested, and will ever rest, upon the bayonet. We have never got beyond the stage of conquest, never assimilated a people to our ways. It almost seems that the qualities which render the Anglo-Saxon successful in conquest—sternness, and a proudness of self-trust which can be repellant—disqualify him for the subtle and delicate task of assimilating subject races, and winning their confidence and affection. It is curious, for instance, how frequently a well-meaning Briton will speak of a foreign church or temple as though it had presented itself to his mind in the same light in which the City of London appeared to Blucher—as something to loot.

Not only are we wanting in sympathy, but we so cultivate our insularity of mind as to make it almost

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impossible for us to gain any real knowledge of the people we govern. Contempt, allied to a narrow preconception, must breed ignorance; for scorn of the sensitive and proud people of the East closes all avenues to anything approaching understanding of their ways of thought and the manner of their lives.

Lord Cromer has said "nothing is commonplace in these strange lands." It is true. The mere fact that everything the Oriental does or thinks is almost an exact opposite from the acts and thoughts of the people of the West would alone account for this. I give a few instances—the subject might fill a volume :—

In the West we wear our best clothes when we go to church. It is not seemly to attend the mosque in anything but plain apparel; at the great prayers of the Feasts the desert Arabs lay aside all their gorgeous robes and don plain, undecorated white.

With us punctuality is taught as a virtue; and to this end our earliest ambition is to possess a watch. My Arab friends always good-naturedly laugh at the idea that I should give myself so much trouble in keeping appointments—even uncongenial ones. In his pictuesque way one of them said to me, "Sir, you carry about with you in your pocket a little Sultan who rules over you!"

It seemed strange to me, at first, on leaving the hotel in the desert oasis, to find that my humble friends, who were sitting on the mats by the door, did not rise when I spoke to them. I should have "ordered the beggars to stand up." But with patience I soon discovered that they remained sitting because they would not do me the injustice of suggesting that I was an arrogant man who would require a poorer man to

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rise at his approach. The Prophet—on whom be blessings and peace—would never do such a thing. In the hotels in Egypt the native servants have positive instructions always to stand when a European appears. I have heard an Englishwoman soundly rating her own Arab servant for momentary forgetfulness in this matter. I have also heard the private opinions of native men, fresh from primitive Moslem communities, on the subject of Western manners.

A short time since a poor tramp in Egypt, shivering with cold in the night, lay down to sleep on the top of a brick kiln. Later on the kiln was fired, and in the morning the charred remains of the wayfarer were found where he had slept. At the inquest, to the English official's intense surprise, the native jury found a verdict of "died from cold." "But the poor man was burnt to a cinder," he insisted. "No! what he died of was the cold that led him to go to sleep on the kiln!"

An Englishman (Lord Cromer mentions this), who was a keen observer of Egyptian manners and customs, tells that as a test of intelligence he once asked a fellah to point to his left ear. A European would certainly have taken hold of the lobe of his left ear with his left hand. The Egyptian passed his right hand over the top of his head, and with that hand grasped the upper part of his left ear.

A lady who has lived the greater part of her life with Arab people told me this anecdote. She had often talked to men, who were fathers, about the idea, so distasteful to her mind, of the daughters being sold in marriage. This was near Algiers, where there are many rich English residents. One day one of these Arab fathers appeared at the lady's house, and asked

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naïvely if it was true that a certain young English lady living near was betrothed. Yes, it *was* true. Was it true, as the Arab had heard, that her father was giving her a handsome fortune to take to her husband. "Yes! it is the English custom for a rich father to give his daughter a dowry on her marriage." "Ah!" he retorted reflectively, but with a provoking twinkle in his eye, "I see how it is. In England the fathers hold their girls so cheaply that they give them away, and even pay their husbands for taking them. With us, they are so dear to us that before we will let them go the man who desires them must pay a handsome price."

The very arrangement of the Koran itself is an instance of this appositiveness; the long chapters are put first, and they gradually fine down to the shortest chapters, although the longest Suras were in nearly every case the last to have been written, and the shortest were the ones first written. No one has altogether realised, I think, the misapprehension and confusion this apparently small matter has brought to European minds. One glance at Sale's arrangement of the Koran, which is the translation Carlyle read, and one understands why he found it "a wearisome, confused jumble, crude, incondite." In Rodwell's arrangement I find the Koran continuously interesting.

And so on *ad infinitum*. What I hope is clear is, how impossible it is for the European to look at the world with the same eyes as the Oriental. Reasoning from the same premises, the two peoples will nearly always arrive at diametrically opposite conclusions; which all shows how much care needs to be exercised before we criticise the things—and especially the religious things—of the East, drawing arguments from

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English experience to apply them to circumstances which do not admit of any such reasoning being applied without great qualifications; and how more than foolish it is to give any excuse for the intelligent Oriental to say of us—"he regards everything with contempt for being so un-European, or more particularly, un-English."

No one can claim, I believe, that we have been careful to study the life and religion of Islam (life and religion here are entirely inseparable) before we have scorned, and often contemned or denounced it. And such ignorance as is shown has not been confined to casual observers, or to those writers who take their foreign travel in pilules, and care only to be breezingly amusing (in the way of Mr. Douglas Sladen, for instance), and are utterly harum-scarum and irresponsible. In that great work on *Modern Egypt*, in which all the facts concerning the material position of the country are set forth with such a masterly hand, Lord Cromer yet falls into errors about the Moslem religion which are surprising.

It was in commenting on this work that a distinguished sheikh said to me, "How easy your task would be in Egypt if you only approached the people in a different spirit. It is only by true respect and understanding of their faith and their religious principles that Europeans have any chance of making themselves sympathetic to the Moslems. All that you can say to us about prosperity and budgets will touch us but feebly. And this is all you want to talk to us about; and Lord Kitchener apparently is determined, from the repression he is now practising in Egypt, on the Press and the students' religious demonstrations especially, that we *shall* talk of nothing else."

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The Bishop of Lahore, who has over a hundred clergy in his diocese, called his staff together when he had been a short time in India, to tell them of his great disappointment at the want of knowledge he found, on their part, of the details of the religion of the Moslem people amongst whom some of them had been working for many years. When he had inquired of his own clergy concerning points of traditional lore which affected the everyday customs of the people—ignorance of which I suspect would completely shut any man out of their lives — not one of them could enlighten him.

Just as the people of the West in the middle ages had to learn how much they had been deceived by the foul abuse which was flung at the Moslems by the Popes and others who were interested in stimulating the fanatical zeal of the Crusades, and respectable historians began to drop those vulgar charges; so, I think, the time must come, if we are not altogether to fail of our opportunity to help these millions of our fellow-men, when we too must advance beyond the ignorant prejudices of the eighteenth century, which still limit the judgment of most Englishmen.

We do not now speak of the "dogs of infidels," as did Catherine of Sienna, following the custom of her day. The vulgarity of the introduction to the first English translation of the Koran, published in London in 1649, belongs happily to a past age: "Good reader, the great Arabian impostor, now at last, after a thousand years, is, by way of France, arrived in England, and his Alcoran, or Galli-manfry of Errors (a brat as deformed as the Parent, and as full of heresies as his scald head was of scurf), hath learned to speak in English."

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I fancy that very few men now seek, as Martin Luther did, to identify Mohammed with Daniel's "Little Horn," to show that fire and brimstone must come upon him. Luther's translation of Brother Richard's exordium is as much out of tune with these times as his own epilogue is, in which he arrived at the final conclusion that of two monsters, "the Pope is worse than Mohammed," who is thus described: "At the time of the Emperor Heraclius there arose a man, yea, a Devil, and first-born son of Satan . . . who wallowed in . . . and he was dealing in the Black Art, and his name was Machumet."

Melanchthon thought Mohammed was inspired by Satan, and "his sect is altogether made up of blasphemy, robbery, and shameful lusts." As for the Koran, "it needs not concern us any more than the portents of the Egyptians, who invoked snakes and cats." Eventually, however, these things, and the silly curses of such men as Prideaux and Spanheim and d'Herbelot, gave way, step by step almost, to more temperate protests, more decent names, less outrageous misrepresentations of both the faith and its founder; until Goethe and Carlyle on the one hand, and the modern phalanx of investigators — Sprenger, Amari, Nöldeke, Muir, and Dozy—on the other, have given the world at large the opportunity of knowing that "Mohammedanism is a thing of vitality, fraught with a thousand fruitful germs; and that Mohammed, whatever view of his character is held, has earned a place in the golden book of Humanity" (Note 19).

Unfortunately prejudice has been slow to give way to such a presentation of the truth, and a more polite mode of speech does not hide a contempt which lingers,

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or disguise views which are almost as wanting in understanding as their coarser forerunners.

When a Moslem review—*Arafate*—was started in Cairo, a year or two since, to discuss, in the French language, the affairs of Islam, a strong protest was entered by a number of leading Moslems, who said, "Do not let us speak of our religion in a European language: these strangers do not understand us."

It is this conviction which accounts for the reserve towards us which has become a habit, and puts almost insuperable difficulties in the way of those who seriously desire to understand the Eastern peoples. The Moslem *expects* the European to ridicule him, or, what is worse, to refer to the Prophet in terms of insult, or to pour scorn upon the Holy Koran. A pious young friend of mine declined an introduction to a missionary of my acquaintance, although I explained that he worked as a doctor of medicine in Egypt, on the ground that "all missionaries refer to our Prophet in a way that is insulting." Many of the great ulemas are against the discussion of the Koran with unbelievers, because they say that the few Europeans who have ever read it did so with the object of turning it to ridicule (Note 20). "Keep away from the insulters" was the recent advice of a leading sheikh in Cairo to young men.

It was interesting to me to find how keen was the Moslem's appreciation of such European writers as had dealt seriously, and with respect, with their religion. Lamartine, for instance, Ruskin, Père Hyacinthe, and Tolstoi are famous authors whose works are all read by cultured Moslems with appreciation, because they know that the tone they adopt towards Islam is fair and generous; and in some cases the influence gained by

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these writers for anything, on whatever subject, they have to say, is founded on nothing more than a kindly passing reference to the religion of the Prophet.

As far as Egypt is concerned, it has been the fault of nearly all books dealing with that country, that the writers have been occupied with everything but an attempt to know the living people. The glories of ancient Egypt, the charm of the Nile, descriptions of the sunset over the minarets of Cairo, or over the red hills of Nubia, word-painting of the externals of native life, such as Harriet Martineau did so perfectly: these have been produced to infinity. And almost always the people, so far as they have come into these books, have not been real people, but part of the scenery. Miss Martineau, who never showed a trace of understanding of the dwellers by the Nile, could yet write with sentiment of the Pharaohs, and of "him who sleeps in Philæ." She thought a hareem was a brothel, and indiscriminately spoke of Moslems, Copts, and Greeks as though an unfathomable gulf divided them from English people (Note 21).

We smile, perhaps, at the idea of the hareem, but have we really advanced much beyond such crude notions of the inner life of the East. A leering use of the word hareem (I have spelt it in this way because the accent is on the *e*, and not as English people always pronounce it), which simply means "reserved," is good enough to make the success of a play which still travels the provinces of England. In many towns I have seen the placards announcing "The Secrets of the H****m" —the thing having gained an advertisement from the protest of the Turkish Ambassador in London, when the word was spelt without the stars.

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And for our guidance we take such widely read melodrama, with its "green turban" and backsheesh fictions, and cut-throat thrills of Sir Gilbert Parker, or the false colouring of Miss Marie Corelli, who does not know one side of the Nile from the other, and can speak of the shade of an avenue of palms from Cairo to the pyramids! Or of all Mr. Hall Caine's misleading though sympathetic raving in *A White Prophet*.

But what are the usual views on the religious subjects dealt with in the foregoing chapters, but equal travesties of the truth? The savage libels of the Popes, invented —in Rome—to stir the Crusading fire, have, to some extent, become embedded in the Western mind, and many people still think with Peter the Hermit, that the Moslem is "the enemy of God," a savage fanatic, an unbridled debauchee, and that the "sword of Islam" is ever raised to strike the Christian's neck if he will not "protest the faith"; that the Moslem invariably enjoys a plurality of wives (and other inmates of the hareem) as a matter of course, that women are denied even the possession of a soul, and that he looks forward to an entirely sensual Paradise. "Islam defies your King!" was the motto cabled by Cairo student volunteers to the London Conference, 1900.

My opinion is that until we get close to the *real people*, no understanding of any of these questions is at all possible. Detached from all the modifications and limitations which come into man's life, and taking no count of his power of adaptability, any Western statement of such questions as those of divorce, for instance, or polygamy, will be utterly misleading. It could never be supposed from the ordinary generalisation of the West, that the liberty of women is in some

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ways greater under Islamic than under Christian laws; that infinitely greater justice is done her, for instance, in the matter of inheritance and the control of her own fortune, or that, if a husband fails in justice in the material affairs of life, the wife may sue for divorce, or that polygamy, the mere mention of which causes horror to the Western mind, can cover the most self-denying and even chivalrous acts. In Egypt many a man has married a brother's widow, or other poor relative, for no reason but to give her the protection of his name, while in this way alone was he able to offer her a home.

The life of the Prophet himself can never be understood until the savage onslaught in the matter of the hareem is stayed while the attempt is made to understand the nature of most of his marriages. To speak of his nine wives, is always thought to establish the charge of gross sensuality. Scarcely a Christian writer has paused to explain that it is quite honestly maintained by reputable Moslem historians that with the exception of Ayesh—whose father begged the honour of marriage for his daughter—all these women were widows, and many of them old, when the Prophet married them. One—Sawdah—he saved from an inevitable return to idolatry; others from poverty and neglect; Zeinab, they assert, he married for no reason but to set right a point of law, for she was hopelessly ill at the time, and died a few months later; while other unions were arranged for political ends, and to extend and strengthen his religion and government.

The great point is—it seems to me—what were the principles of Mohammed's mind on the subject of women? It is abundantly clear that he always preached

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the kindness he never failed to show; to wrong a woman he denounced as great wickedness. Mohammed never divorced a wife, nor chastised one, although he considered this allowable, and he was certainly provoked. It was because of an outrage by a Jew on the modesty of a Moslem girl that the Prophet's first rage against the Jews was raised. As Sheikh Rashid Rida reminded me, one of the best known sayings of the Prophet is, "Do no harm to a woman; he who does her harm is a very wicked man." His constant advice to his followers was to live in such a way as to show a pure example to their wives and children; for "religion is good character."

But Mr. Zwemer does not hesitate to go to the coarsest of Eastern writers to traduce the Prophet in this matter, "which must be shrouded from decent eyes," quoting a recent writer in "a leading Missionary Magazine": "We must pass the matter over, simply noting that there are depths of filth in the Prophet's character which may assort well enough with the depraved sensuality of the bulk of his followers, . . . but which are simply loathsome in the eyes of all over whom Christianity in any measure or degree has influence." These disgusting things, asserts this writer, are the fireside literature of educated Moslems. This sort of abuse really carries us back again to Crusading times, when men were told that the Koran was a "bestial work," not to be read, but burnt; and that Mohammed was "of all monsters the greatest—more filthy than mud."

The Sheikh Rashid Rida, as well as every educated Moslem to whom I referred this terrible charge, gave the lie direct to such a statement. They said that Insan el Ayun and Ibn Ishak were mere story-tellers, and not historians at all; but that Bakhari, whose name

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Mr. Zwemer links with theirs as his authorities, is a reputable historian, and *he* never tells of such things as are hinted at.

Do these writers forget the sort of talk Chaucer's pilgrims indulged in whilst on a religious errand; or the indecent references (to present ideas) on every page of Shakespeare, which were apparently suited to the English fireside in the sixteenth century; to say nothing of the more grossly lewd writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries. Have they no sense of justice sufficient to cause them to realise what the standard in such matters would be in Arabia in the seventh century?

And as a literary sheikh, a man with an Oxford degree, said to me, with an impulsive rage at certain recent attacks upon Islam: "There is polygamy and massacre enough and to spare in the Bible, and its heroes are in no way exempt from human frailties. Why do your writers act as though all the Christians must be angels and all the Moslems tigers? And what do the Christian missionaries think they gain by showing such contempt and even hatred for the Oriental people? Do they think we could ever be induced to listen to any message they may wish to deliver to us after they have covered all that we hold most sacred with such abuse? We do not insult you, or condemn your religion. It has been said that, notwithstanding the copiousness of the Arabic language, it has no forms of expression, to describe any race, which are contemptible or insulting. The insults to our Prophet by some modern writers are atrocious; in the case of a man like Professor D. S. Margoliouth (particularly in his *Life of Mohammed*), they show that entire lack of understanding of Islam, which appears in all these writings; but on the part of missionaries

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they betray, to my mind, not only want of just historic judgment, but an egregious folly. Every mention a Moslem makes of the Prophet shows our veneration for him. No one of us believes of him such charges as Christian writers concoct. All we know of him teaches us that he had elevation of mind, delicacy and refinement of feeling. 'He is more modest than a virgin behind her curtain,' it was said of him. Khadijah, the one wife with whom he lived so many years, paid constant tribute to the purity of his character. 'Thou art of a good life,' she said. His earliest converts reported of him to the King of Abyssinia: 'A Prophet arose whom we knew from our youth, with whose descent and conduct and good faith and morality we are well acquainted.' He always exhibited a noble forbearance and forgiveness. He hated shams and lying, and—strange as it may seem to Western critics—the Prophet himself gave no encouragement to the superstitions which crept into Islam—just as our Lord Jesus, on whom be blessings and peace, said no word that could excuse the superstitions which later crept into the Christian religion, and still linger there in the races which are predisposed to them (Note 22).

"Men who knew the Prophet intimately conceived for him a profound attachment. One of the first martyrs, Urwah ibn Mas'nd, counted it an honour to run all risks to carry the message he received from the Prophet's lips to his fellow-countrymen in Tà'if. While he was preaching he was mortally wounded by an arrow, and died giving thanks to God for having granted him such a glorious end.

"But I grow enthusiastic in defence of the Prophet against the slanders of men who are ill-fitted to form a

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Photo] [*Lekegian, Cairo.*

OUTSIDE ONE OF THE OLD-FASHIONED KORAN SCHOOLS—KUTTABS—IN CAIRO.

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just judgment," continued the sheikh. "You will suspect my special pleading. Happily, not all English writers are so ignorant and unfair. Some years since, a great Christian Oriental scholar (whose work I believe inspired Mr. Bosworth Smith to so ably defend Islam against such attacks) went to all the available documents, in a scientific and historical spirit, to learn the character of Mohammed from the testimony of his contemporaries. This is the genial picture which he painted of our hero :—

"'Mohammed was most indulgent to his inferiors, and would never allow his awkward little page to be scolded, whatever he did. "Ten years," said Anas, his servant, "was I about the Prophet, and he never said as much as 'uff' to me." He was very affectionate towards his family. One of his boys died on his breast, in the smoky house of the nurse, a blacksmith's wife. He was very fond of children. He would stop them in the streets and pat their little cheeks.

"'He never struck anyone in his life. The worst expression he ever made use of in conversation was, "What has come to him? May his forehead be darkened with mud!" When asked to curse someone, he replied, "I have not been sent to curse, but to be a mercy to mankind." He visited the sick, followed any bier he met, accepted the invitation of a slave to dinner, mended his own clothes, milked his own goats, and waited upon himself, relates summarily another tradition.

"'"He never first withdrew his hand out of another man's palm, and turned not before the other had turned." "His hand," we read elsewhere—and traditions like these give a good index of what the Arabs expected their Prophet to be—"was the most generous, his breast the most courageous, his tongue the most truthful; he was the most faithful protector of those

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he protected, the sweetest and most agreeable in conversation; those who saw him were suddenly filled with reverence, those who came near him loved him."

"'He was of great taciturnity, and when he spoke, he spoke with emphasis and deliberation, and no one could ever forget what he said. He was, however, very nervous and restless withal, often low spirited, downcast as to heart and eyes. Yet he would at times suddenly break through these broodings, become gay, talkative, jocular, chiefly among his own. He would then delight in telling amusing little stories, fairy-tales, and the like. He would romp with the children and play with their toys.'

"That is the man whom Moslems revere. If the Western people would forget their preconceptions and their hostility, and would approach a study of Islam and its Prophet in that spirit, it might be possible for them to find some sort of understanding of the problems of the Orient, which, by general agreement, holds mysteries the missionaries and others have progressed but a short way towards solving."

It has been my hope and desire to do a little (no one can be so conscious as I am of how little I have the capacity to do, in comparison with what I think is necessary), towards presenting not only the views of the Islamic people, but pictures of them "in their habit as they live," so that their customs and their laws may be considered as they fit into their everyday lives, and thus take their right adjustment and proportion.

It is obvious that to understand any people one must bring sympathy to the study of them, and if they are of a different religion, an effort must be made to detach

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the mind as far as possible from preconceived ideas, and above all things not to judge by excrescences ("It is like judging of the health of a people from its hospitals, or its morality from its prisons," said Professor Max Müller), and to seek the good rather than the bad, bringing to the study a genial and not a hostile spirit.

It is our duty to seek for the ideals of the people we would help, and to avoid showing ourselves, if not the enemies of advance in culture and morals, at least not an obstacle to them, although they are not along the lines which we should choose. It would almost appear sometimes that certain missionaries and other Christian critics of Islam would prefer to see the people "sit in darkness," if they will not take the light immediately from their hands.

It is indeed a strange thing that it should be the missionary whose judgment speaks of "a fell system of religion which blasts all that is true and noble," calling it a "curse hanging over the people"; and who will believe nothing good of the Prophet or of his followers.

And yet the missionary who seeks to dismiss the Prophet's well-known detestation of divorce by stating that "Mohammed is *said* to disapprove of divorce," will not hesitate to draw upon anything that is *said* of the Prophet in the traditional sayings and anecdotes, nothing being too trivial or absurd to be credited if it will make a knot in the whip to flay his followers with. In seeking an interpretation, however, of *Biblical* texts which please him, Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall speaks of going to "the *best* MSS" (*Religion of the Crescent*, p. 215).

The bias shown becomes ridiculous when Gibbon's historical tribute to the Arab people is put down to 'poetic fancy"; the only time, I imagine, that such a

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tender quality has been associated with the author of the *Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*. We are even *told*, "of the contribution of the Saracens to learning!" is the most that this same writer will allow to the days of Islam's greatness.

It is the impartial scholar like Dr. Butler who can appreciate the debt which even Christianity owes to early Islam for "its chastening and ennobling fires." In those early days, before the era of misrepresentation set in, the Christian tributes to Islam were simple and sincere. It was Sebolos, not only a Christian, but a Bishop, who wrote: "At that time a certain man of the sons of Ishmael, whose name was Mohammed, a merchant, appeared to his people, as it were by the order of God, preaching the truth. . . . Inasmuch as the command was from on high, by his sole behest all the nation came together in a union of law, and forsaking vain idols, returned to the living God, who had appeared to their father Abraham. Mohammed bid them . . . not to drink wine, or to tell a lie, or to commit fornication."

It is significant that Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall, in his savage onslaught, asserts positively that Omar burnt the Alexandrian library, to prove that Islam is "essentially the foe of all forms of progress" (*Religion of the Crescent*, p. 203), utterly ignoring the overwhelming mass of evidence adduced by Dr. Butler which shows the injustice of the charge (*The Arab Conquest of Egypt*, ch. xxv.). One is tempted to ask if this critic has never heard of this evidence, so amply confirming Gibbon's doubts as to Omar's guilt, which doubts Mr. Tisdall has declared to be "vain." Or has he never heard of the Christian burning of books, not in Cordova only, but in every Moorish town in Spain; of the destruction by the

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Crusaders of an immense library at Tripoli in Palestine; or of the burning by the Christian French, when they took Constantine, in North Africa, of invaluable books and MSS. Or of how the English, when they captured Magdala, found a large library of Abyssinian books, which they carried away haphazard, and, because transport was troublesome, abandoned the greater part. The few they selected at random to retain have shown what treasures have been lost to the world.

If Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall finds himself logically confronted with a Christian doctrine, or a Biblical passage, which may suggest misgivings in his denunciations of Islam, he at once declares that *this* is "contrary to many passages" in the Scriptures, and to the *spirit* of Christianity. But there is no verbal or patristic bond too small to imprison his opponents from any hope of growth or development.

The very legends which grew up round the life of the Prophet, those childish miracles attributed to his birth, and sayings and doings, and to his death, and which every word of Mohammed's own teaching went to disprove in advance, these are good enough to be brought against the religion of the Crescent, regardless of the fact that similar fables were associated by early Christians with the Life of our Lord, and in Egypt are still treasured as articles of faith by the Coptic Christians to this day. Mohammed said: "I never claimed that Allah's treasures are in my hands, that I knew the hidden things, or that I was an angel—I, who cannot even help or trust myself, without God's will. Will ye not reflect a little?"

And as though this were not enough, one of the latest books coming from men and women who are

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engaged in the work of trying to save these people to a nobler and more generous faith, the very service that the Prophet did for humanity, in for ever putting an end to the cruel practice he found in Arabia, of burying girl infants alive, is referred to in these scandalously unfair words, "Mohammed improved on the barbaric method, and discovered a way by which *all* females could be buried alive and yet live on—namely, the veil" (*Our Moslem Sisters*, edited by S. M. Zwemer), the ignorance of which statement should have been manifest to any student of the Bible, for seclusion of women goes back to Old Testament times (Esther ii. 3). It is the hareem alone, guarded by the "keeper of the women," as the Bible puts it, that matters; the veil may easily come to mean little more in the way of restraint than those worn by fashionable women in Hyde Park.

Well might Max Müller declare that "No judge, if he had before him the worst criminal, would treat him as most historians and theologians have treated the religions of the world."

Why must it be confessed that, in so very many cases, we must go to the ordinary traveller, or to the secular resident, in Eastern lands especially, and not to the missionary, if we want anything like a kindly view of the people?

In China, as an instance, the venerable Dr. Griffith John of Hankow, whose recent death is so much deplored, constantly penned the most scathing and damning indictments of the people for whose spiritual welfare he was at work—people who "disgust and dispel" (*The Supreme Motive in Foreign Missions*, p. 7). I suppose Sir Robert Hart, after fifty-four years' work

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amongst the Chinese, had opportunities as great as the missionary for knowing their character. In almost the last speech he made in England, Sir Robert spoke of his respect for the Chinese, and enumerated their fine qualities—and this when his diplomatic career was over, so that he could speak without reserve. Mrs. Archibald Little, who has travelled so much in China, never loses an opportunity of telling of the affection and respect she has conceived for its people.

The kindly word about the Egyptians is spoken by such people as Lady Duff Gordon, and, in the present day, by Mr. Talbot Kelly, the artist, who have lived familiarly for long periods amongst them.

Going farther, towards Central Africa, it is such travellers as Miss Mary Kingsley, Lady Lugard, *A Resident's Wife in Nigeria* (Mrs. Constance Larymore), Mr. E. D. Morel, the unbiased students of humanity, who find excellent, and even lovable qualities in the people, and who are able to see that, although so different from those of the West, moral qualities and pious inclinations may be commendable in them.

No one could have been present at the meetings of the Universal Races Congress held in London recently, and have heard the growl of dissent which always met any reference to the missionary version of the distant races, or the cheers which always responded to the kindly word spoken by such travellers as I have mentioned; or could have seen the warm encouragement which the Congress extended to the race representatives themselves, when they appealed for our help and our recognition of the good after which they were striving, without being convinced that the English and American position as missionary nations demands serious reflec-

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tion, and possibly a deep-reaching reformation, in both its spirit and its methods, if public opinion is not to rise as a flood against it. It may well be seriously pondered (especially in view of the failure, almost universally confessed, to really conquer the regions to which spiritual siege has been laid) if the history of missions in Islamic lands may not, when the long tale of hopeful years is told, have written against them by the inexorable hand of time, the words with which Herodotus closed his account of the hopeless venture of Cambyses into Ethopia: "Thus ended the expedition."

Mighty Christian Churches have fallen away from this continent in the past, leaving not a vestige of their existence behind, and Christian colonies, started with highest hopes by brave men, have vanished like clouds, before the insistency of human type, and its natural predilections, to which the pioneers of a differing civilisation and faith could not fit their message.

Just as I believe the Christian gospel to be the highest message to mankind, so I believe there is a way by which it can be commended to every people. When I contemplate the methods of many of the modern missionaries at work in Moslem lands, I always feel inclined to turn away from their adverse writings on Islam, to consider the example of that greatest Missionary to mankind—the gentle Teacher who avoided controversy, and "went about doing good." How often has His doctrine been commended to the minds of men by just following His divine example? It is this that can break down opposition, otherwise invulnerable; the benevolent human contact teaches lessons before which the barriers of creed fall away, and men, in getting nearer to God, see each other as fellow-creatures of His,

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standing apart from the artificial limitations they have created for themselves, and which have caused them to ignore the eternal verities. Faith, Hope, Charity abideth—and the greatest is *charity*.

When Lady Duff Gordon attended with her own hands to the needs of her poor Moslem guest at Luxor, who died with his hand in hers, she did more to remove the barriers which separate the creeds than any sort of controversy about them can ever do. It was she, a Christian woman, who turned the dying man's face towards Mecca, and nodded to the Moslems present to chant his last profession of Faith in the One God; and she closed his eyes. She followed the body to the burial-place, with the women, who "Wailed for a brother who had died far from his place." No one thought to object to her presence in the mosque, and her "Frankish hat" in the midst of the veiled and wailing women caused no comment. And after the burial "the Imām, Sheikh Abd-el-Waris, came and kissed me on the shoulders, and the Sherif, a man of eighty, laid his hands on my shoulders and said, 'Fear not, my daughter, neither all the days of thy life, nor at the hour of death, for God is with thee!' I kissed the old man's hand and turned to go, but numberless men came and said, 'A thousand thanks, O our sister, for what thou hast done for one among us,' and a great deal more." Here is a true way for missions.

Intellectually we shall, I feel sure, lose nothing by exercising care to do the Arab people historical justice. We must be wanting in frankness if we do not admit that the religion of Islam brought a great advance to the idolatrous and warring people who first received it; the debt we owe to the Islamic East for maintaining

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the light of knowledge while Christendom was in its "dark ages" is incontestable.

Religion we may admit to have its basis in the truth of things, and that all great religions have proved blessings to the peoples among whom they have originated, marking a stage in their history. Each has a calendar crowded with the names of saints and martyrs. They are identified in the affections of their votaries with venerated names, an insult to whom is as unpardonable as an insult to the Hebrew prophets or apostles, or even the Founder of the Christian faith, would be to Christians. And these religions have proved themselves enduring and so suited to the spiritual needs of men on a great scale that they should compel respect. If we can add to respect, impartial justice and courtesy, and a love of mankind enough to eliminate all traces of contempt or of pharisaical judgment, then we may hope to advance—if genuine advance, rather than mere proselytism, is our aim.

There is no need for discouragement because missionary proselytism seems to fail. The Pharisees had that kind of zeal, and what Jesus thought of them and their zeal we learn from His words, "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is become so, ye make him twofold more a son of hell than yourselves." Dr. Grant has truly said, "Proselytism detaches individuals, who as a rule are worth little, but it arrests internal development. It is *Prophetism* that gains individuals, who become centres of force, and it thus initiates movements which may be delayed or defeated, but cannot be destroyed" (Note 23). It was God Himself who "made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts xvii. 26).

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The Christian message, and all the moral splendour which has come from its advance, does not need, as a preparation for its conquest, anything of abuse or unfair depreciation towards Mohammed or his religion, or indeed towards any religion. These things occupy our time unprofitably and impede our progress. Our work is to *be* Christians, in the simple way of Christ, and then to say to men of other beliefs—Here is Jesus, what think ye of Him? "The most earnest men will gradually draw nearer and nearer to Christianity, and the end will come gradually and almost imperceptibly, the darkness fading into twilight, and the twilight vanishing in the full glory of the dawn of the Sun of Righteousness."[1]

[1] *Religion of the Crescent*, p. 230. For once I am glad to be able to quote with consent the words of the writer with whom I have shown so much dissent.

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NOTES

There is Nothing Good in Islam.—Note 1 (p. 260).

"It is asserted that, according to the philosophers of old, the first thing to be done in searching for a knowledge of God was to learn to know oneself. Such an idea would have seemed impious to Mohammed, if it had occurred to him." "However, it is said that Ali asserted, 'Whoever knows himself knows his Lord.' But this is contrary to 'orthodox' Islam, and is explained away. . . ."—*The Religion of the Crescent*, St. Clair-Tisdall, p. 57.

Was the Vision of the Prophet a Dream?—Note 2 (p. 262).

With regard to this vision, out of which adverse critics have made much capital, a great Oriental scholar has said: "Mohammed is not to be made responsible for some of his enthusiastic admirers when they transformed this vision—a vision as grand as any in the whole Divine Comedy, which indeed has unconsciously borrowed some of its richest plumage from it, but which Mohammed, until he was sick of it, insisted on calling a *Dream*—into insipidity and drivel."—"Islam," *Quarterly Review*, October 1869.

Missionary Antagonism.—Note 3 (p. 269).

Religion of the Crescent (p. 217). May I inquire how it is that such books as this, and *Islam: a Challenge to Faith*, are written, not in Moslem lands, but the one from Bedford and the other from New York. Such a spirit of prejudice and antagonism is, I believe, absent almost always from the writings of missionaries whose life-work is actually all accomplished amongst the people. It seems to me that it is the missionary who, for reasons a layman cannot understand, leaves the social work of the missionary to labour at his desk, and to constantly appear on the Western platform, who usually writes without sympathy and understanding of the Moslem world.

The Koran as a Confirmation of Previous Scriptures.—Note 4 (p. 270).

The Reproach of Islam (p. 312). The Moslems do not claim that the Koran came to replace the Bible, but to supplement it. The exact words of the Koran itself are, it "confirmeth what was revealed before it, and is an explanation of the Scriptures."—Sura x. 38. (Repeated again and again.—Sura xxxv. 28; Sura xii. 3.) To every nation a Book has been sent, was in effect the theory of the Prophet, and this my nation has not been left without a witness. He had deep respect for the Book of the Jews and Christians, and even told his followers to seek instruction therein if they were in doubt about matters of their own faith.

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FICTION ON EGYPT.—Note 5 (p. 276).

Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall has written a great deal of fiction about the people of Egypt (*Children of the Nile, Said the Fisherman*) which has had a wide acceptance in the West; and Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne has also written a number of vivid sketches of Arab character. And Sir Gilbert Parker has written fiction about Egypt which betrays in every page a want of knowledge of all things Islamic—he even builds on the commonest of errors, that the Prophet's tomb is at Mecca. There is a cruel and relentless note in these authors which I have never found in any work by a responsible writer not concerned to produce thrilling fiction, but to describe the life of the people as he has actually experienced it: to record facts rather than to draw pictures. At random I instance *Village Life*, giving a simple account of the fellaheen, sixty years ago, and *Adventures in the Libyan Desert*, by Bayle St. John, Miss Kingsley's works, Lady Lugard's, Lady Duff Gordon's simple letters from Luxor to her family, and recently Mr. Talbot Kelly's notes to his beautiful pictures, chiefly of country life in Egypt, and Mr. E. D. Morel's work on Nigeria. Mr. Morel only a year or two since did great service to humanity in leading to the suppression of the Congo atrocities, for which he was enthusiastically commended by the Christian public. A kindly word for the Moslem, however, in his later work, and the editor of *East and West*, the S.P.G. journal, dismisses him as a man who has "considerably shaken" his confidence in the accuracy of his information!

AN AGENT'S REPORT ON EGYPT.—Note 6 (p. 294).

The Arab Conquest of Egypt (p. 434). It is worthy of note that one passage in a report of Amr of his work as Governor of Egypt reads strangely, as coming from a representative of "that scourge of God"—as it became the Christian fashion to call the Moslems: "The land-tax is not demanded before its due season; a third of the revenue is spent on bridges and sluice-gates. If the governors continue to act thus, the revenue will be doubled, and God will reconcile the different religions and the variety of worldly interests." Written by Amr in Egypt, to the Caliph Omar, in Arabia. These words might almost have come from the pen of a modern British agent.

AN ERROR OF THE BISHOP OF LONDON.—Note 7 (p. 295).

That the old historical fallacies are slow to die, is shown by the fact that the present Bishop of London could declare—before he had visited Moslem lands—that Islam turns out the name of Christ as evil. The Crusaders were urged on their quest by being told that the Moslems "defiled the Holy Sepulchre." The name of our Lord Jesus is as sacred to all Moslems as is the name of Mohammed, and is used with exactly the same terms of reverence. Their veneration for the tombs of saints is profound; how then do they regard the tomb of this great prophet Christ? It is to Jerusalem, Islam believes, that He will come again a second time. It is in Jerusalem that one of the three most sacred of all the Moslem mosques is found, to which many pilgrims journey after visiting the Prophet's tomb in Medina.

THE CRUSADERS WADING IN MOSLEM BLOOD.—Note 8 (p. 295).

When Jerusalem was retaken by the Crusaders—in July 1099, there followed most revolting scenes of fanatical cruelty, resulting in the indis-

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criminate slaughter of countless thousands of Moslem men and women. So great indeed was the massacre, that in a public letter to the Pope the leader of the Christian forces boasted that in the Mosque of Omar they rode up to the horses' knees in the blood of the Saracens. The Crusaders led out of the town Moslem hostages to the number of five thousand, and slaughtered them in cold blood. It is indeed true that the history of the Crusades was written in letters of blood. Saladin took reprisals at Tiberias, and in the murder of the members of the Order of Jerusalem, two hundred and thirty in number.

MOSLEMS CHARGED WITH TOLERATION AS AN OFFENCE.—Note 9 (p. 297).

Renan, *Averroes et averroism*. As Arnold has pointed out, "this very spirit of toleration was made one of the main articles in an account of the *Apostasies and Treasons of the Moriscoes*, drawn up by the Archbishop of Valencia in 1602, when recommending their expulsion to Philip III., as follows: "That they commended nothing so much as that liberty of conscience, in all matters of religion, which the Turks and all other Mohammedans suffer their subjects to enjoy."—*The Preaching of Islam*, pp. 123–24.

CHRISTIAN FANATICISM.—Note 10 (p. 298).

More enlightened days have, unfortunately, not been without the most appalling instances of Christian fanaticism. During forty or fifty years of the seventeenth century the Catholic Poles inflicted the most fearful atrocities on the Russians of the Orthodox Eastern Church. They killed 70,000 to 80,000 souls. Well might Macarius, Patriarch of Antioch, exclaim, "God perpetuate the empire of the Turks for ever and ever! For they take their impost, and enter into no account of religion, be their subjects Christian or Nazarene, Jew or Samaritan." During the Reformation period the Protestants of Hungary and other places preferred the rule of the Turks to that of the Catholics, and cases occurred of Protestants who fled into Turkish territory to find under Islamic laws the freedom of religious worship and opinions, which were denied them in Christian Europe. In judging of the persecutions and atrocities in Turkey during the last century, such facts as these should be kept in mind; and the religion of Islam should not be made responsible for the crimes of its followers who have fallen away from its teaching. One of the latest Christian persecutions was that of King John of Abyssinia, who in 1878 ordained that men should all be of one religion throughout the whole of his kingdom; even Christians were forbidden to belong to any other sect than the Jacobite. By 1880 he is said to have compelled 50,000 Moslems, amongst others, to be baptised.

A GENUINE DISLIKE OF USURY.—Note 11 (p. 299).

It is interesting to note that when, in March 1901, the Post Office Savings Bank was established in Egypt, the Moslems very generally indicated that they regretted they could not put their money into it because they were offered interest. After a time, however, the convenience of such a safe place of deposit so appealed to them, that many of them placed their money in the Post Office, but steadfastly refused the interest, no less than 3195 persons doing this in two years. The authorities now consulted the Grand Mufti, and other officials of Islam, and as these men recognised that such interest was earned by the money and had no connection with "usury," the extortionate use of money which

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the Prophet intended to forbid, a law was framed making it possible for Moslems to use the Bank without breaking a religious law. In the very next year nearly 30,000 Moslem depositors were using the Bank, including ninety-four of the ulema and sheikh class. I do not think that Mr. Gairdner should suggest that such men are not much troubled by questions of " trade and morality."—*Reproach of Islam*, p. 200.

FIRST AND SECOND-CLASS FUNERAL PALLS.—Note 12 (p. 335).

Religion of the Crescent (p. 206). I cannot refrain from noting, that as I was writing these words I looked from my window in Siena and saw passing a misericordia funeral; the deceased was evidently poor and obscure, for the pall allowed by this charitable Christian brotherhood was that of the *second* class; the one for the rich and distinguished—of the *first* class—is embroidered in gold. The two covers may be seen thus labelled in a room of St. Catherine's House.

THE DEPRAVITY OF ARABIA AS THE PROPHET FOUND IT.—Note 13 (p. 344).

This terrible picture seems to accord with Professor Palmer's statement of the degradation of the religion of the time. " At the time of Mohammed's appearance the national religion of the Arabs had so far degenerated as to have scarcely any believers. The primeval Sabæanism was all but lost, and even the worship of the powers of nature had become little more than a gross fetishism; as one of Mohammed's contemporaries said, when they found a fine stone they adored it, or failing that, milked a camel over a heap of sand and worshipped that."—*Sacred Books of the East*, edited by Max Müller, vol. vi. p. 15.

MR. ZWEMER'S QUOTATION.—Note 14 (p. 345).

Islam: a Challenge to Faith (pp. 6–7). It is difficult to know what to say of a writer's views who will quote such stuff from the seventeenth century as, " Now consider this Moamed, or Machumed, whom God gave up to a blind mind . . . falling sickness and being tormented by the Devil," etc. etc., with the comment " not altogether bad for a seventeenth-century synopsis " (p. 40).

MOHAMMED AND DIVORCE.—Note 15 (p. 351).

The Religion of the Crescent (p. 195). Over and over again Mr. St. Clair-Tisdall dismisses the traditional sayings which are creditable to Mohammed; " he is *said* to have disapproved of divorce," and over and over again he accepts without question any tradition on this subject which brings a discredit. What the Prophet is *said* to have said or done then becomes evidence.

MOSLEM WOMEN AND THE PRAYERS.—Note 16 (p. 358).

" Women are bound to perform the prescribed prayers as well as the men," says the Rev. F. A. Klein in *The Religion of Islam*. This author's object is not to state his version of the religion, but to go to the Moslem authorities. He finds that women's prayer was so much taken for granted that it is an instruction for the worshippers in the mosque: " When prayer is ended the men remain standing in their places for a short time to allow the women who may have been sitting behind to retire first " (p. 140).

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MOSLEM WOMEN NOT RESTRAINED OF NECESSITY.—Note 17 (p. 370).

It is interesting as showing that the restraints put upon women are not due altogether to Islam, to find Palgrave constantly stating that in primitive Arabia the women have considerable freedom. I myself saw something in North Africa of a great Moslem brotherhood, which has its centre at Bou Saada, and only a few years ago was governed very ably by a woman, who inherited her position from the Marabout (sheikh) as his only child.

DO THE FRENCH UNDERSTAND THE MOSLEMS BETTER THAN THE ENGLISH? —Note 18 (p. 372).

It is generally thought that the French people (in Egypt, at any rate), have—and do—always come nearer to a sympathetic understanding of the Moslem people here than those of any other nation. It was, I think, only a Christian Frenchman who could have written these words of the Moslems: "We wait also the return of the Messiah, though we do not know when or how He will appear. Nevertheless, the Spirit of Jesus, who is light and love, can spread itself abroad in the hearts of men with a power and a new purity to accomplish between brothers, too long enemies, a reconciliation which is altogether beyond their own efforts. Be then Christians of Islam and Moslems of the Gospel."—*Hyacinthe Loyson*, in 1895.

VICTOR HUGO'S ABUSE.—Note 19 (p. 381).

A writer in the *Quarterly Review*, October 1869. Victor Hugo, however, speaks of Mohammed as "the brother of vultures."

NO MOSLEM TRANSLATION OF THE KORAN.—Note 20 (p. 382).

The Koran itself is always at a disadvantage with Western students, as it has never been translated by a Moslem. In the discussion of vital passages with learned ulemas I have often found how wide of the meaning put upon it by Moslems is the most careful English translation. At present it is almost useless to hope that any great Arabic scholar, who is both an Arab and a Moslem, will undertake the work of translating the Koran into English. For one thing, every pious Moslem is afraid to risk the loss of the true meaning by translation; and they do not believe that the West cares to know the truth about their religion and their "book."

OLD BOOKS OF TRAVEL OR NEW?—Note 21 (p. 383).

"It is curious that all old books of travel I have read mention the natives of strange countries in a far more natural tone, and with far more attempt to discriminate character, than modern ones. *Have* we grown so *very* civilised since a hundred years, that outlandish people seem like mere puppets, and not like real human beings?"—*Letters from Egypt*, Lady Duff Gordon.

MOHAMMED OPPOSED TO SUPERSTITIOUS RITES.—Note 22 (p. 388).

Among the last words Mohammed spoke was a strong protest to those members of his despairing family who had resorted to superstitious rites and formulas to find a cure for his disease.

A SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT.—Note 23 (p. 390).

Religions of the World, G. M. Grant, D.D. I am indebted to this little work, unique in its spirit, as it is forcible and clear in its style, for several thoughts in this chapter.

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CHIEF BOOKS REFERRED TO AND QUOTED

AMEER ALI, SYED, M.A., *The Spirit of Islam.*
ARNOLD, T. W., B.A., *The Preaching of Islam: A History of the Propagation of the Moslem Faith.*
BADR, MOHAMMED, F.R.S., *The Truth about Islam.*
BOER, DR. T. J., *The History of Philosophy in Islam.*
BUTLER, ALFRED J., D.Litt., *The Arab Conquest of Egypt.*
BLYDEN, ED. W., LL.D., *Christianity, Islam, and the Negro Race.*

CROMER, the Earl of, *Modern Egypt.*

FIELD, CLAUD, *Mystics and Saints of Islam.*
FORSTER, the Rev. CHARLES, B.D., *Mohammedanism Unveiled.*

GAIRDNER, the Rev. W. H. T., *The Reproach of Islam.*
GORDON, Lady DUFF, *Letters from Egypt.*

JOHNSTONE, DE LACY, M.A., *Mohammed and his Power.*

KLEIN, the Rev. F. A., *The Religion of Islam.*

LANE, EDWARD WILLIAM, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*; Translation of *The Arabian Nights Entertainments.*
LANE-POOLE, STANLEY, *Cairo: Sketches of its History, Monuments, and Social Life; Studies in a Mosque; Speeches and Table Talk of the Prophet Mohammed.*

MARGOLIOUTH, Professor D. S., *Mohammed and the Rise of Islam*; *Mohammedanism.*

PALGRAVE, WILLIAM GIFFORD, *A Year's Journey through Central and Eastern Arabia.*
PALMER, Professor E. H., Translation of The Koran.

ROBINSON, the Rev. CHARLES H., M.A., *Mohammedanism, has it any Future?*
RODWELL, the Rev. J. M., M.A., Translation of The Koran.

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SALE, GEORGE, Translation of the Koran (with Notes and Introduction of great value).
SMITH, R. BOSWORTH, M.A., *Mohammed and Mohammedanism.*
STANLEY, Dean, *Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church.*
ST. JOHN, BAYLE, *Village Life in Egypt.*
ST. CLAIR-TISDALL, M.A., D.D., *The Religion of the Crescent.*

WATSON, CHARLES R., *Egypt and the Christian Crusade.*
WHINFIELD, E. H., M.A., *Masnavi I Ma'Navi.*

ZWEMER, SAMUEL M., F.R.G.S., *Islam: A Challenge to Faith; Our Moslim Sisters* (edited by S. M. Zwemer and Miss A. Van Sommer).

The author has had the advantage of many original translations from Arabic and other Eastern writers, including the works of most of the living authorities on the subjects dealt with.

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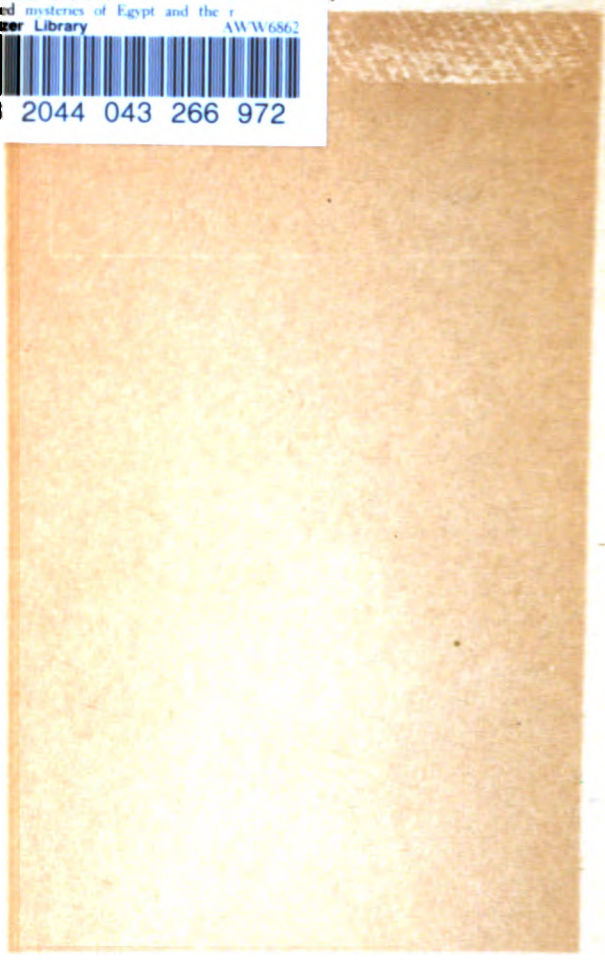
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